

Hafa Adai!

Shoreline repairs to commence at Outer Cove Marina. **Page 3**

HS students to compete in inaugural moot court competition. **PAGE 5**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 242



www.saipantribune.com

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6, 2023

www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Tinian's *man'amko* center runs out of electric power

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The *man'amko* center on Tinian has shut down and is expected to remain closed for the rest of the week after it ran out of prepaid power that was keeping the center running.

It was learned that the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. had sent a notice to the Tinian Office on Aging and Department of Finance yesterday, informing them that power at the Tinian *man'amko* center had been

See TINIAN on Page 4



The Tinian *man'amko* center is currently closed.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IN NEW CONTEMPT SUIT VS. TORRES Barcinas' appointment as pro tem judge is opposed

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Special prosecutor-turned-assistant attorney general James Kingman is opposing the appointment of Guam Superior Court Judge Arthur R. Barcinas as judge pro tempore in the government's new contempt suit against former

governor Ralph DLG Torres, his reason being procedural delays in the ongoing criminal suit against the former governor.

After all sitting CNMI Superior Court judges recused themselves from the new lawsuit Kingman filed against the ex-governor

See KINGMAN on Page 4

MVA launches Christmas in the Marianas

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority has officially launched its annual Christmas in the Marianas event—this time at the T Galleria instead of the Paseo

de Marianas, where it is usually held, due to ongoing renovations at the Paseo.

MVA unveiled its Christmas in the Marianas event last Saturday through a lighting ceremony, with the aim of evoking Christmas cheer among tourists and members of the CNMI community.

A handful of Christmas trees decorated by local schools with recycled materials were lit up at the event, signifying the start of the annual event.

See MVA on Page 4

IPI gets 30-day notice to pay \$62M

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Casino Commission board has given Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC 30 days to pay the \$62 million total in casino license fees it owes the CNMI government.

Shortly after the CCC board's monthly meeting on Thursday, the board handed IPI the notice to pay the gov-

ernment within 30 days the total amount of casino license fees that remains unpaid in the last four years.

The notice of payment deadline was issued by CCC vice chair Rafael S. Demapan that day to IPI director Howyo Chi. CCC board chair

Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero recused from the case.

Chi said yesterday that they are still working on a response

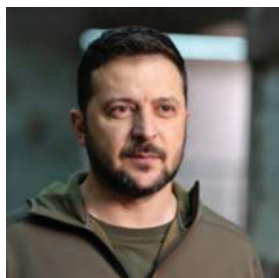
See IPI on Page 4



Commonwealth Casino Commission commissioner Mariano Taitano, center, stresses a point as CCC board vice chair Rafael S. Demapan, right, and commissioner Martin T. Mendiola listen during a break in the board's monthly meeting at the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai last Thursday.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

INSIDE



NATION

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will address U.S. senators by video on Tuesday.

PAGE 11



ASIA

North Korea accuses the United States of double standards for letting South Korea launch a spy satellite.

PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE

Character actor Paul Giamatti may finally land his first best actor Oscar nomination.

PAGE 14



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Lacking counselors, US schools are turning to online therapy

By JOCELYN GECKER
Associated Press

Trouble with playground bullies started for Maria Ishoo's daughter in elementary school. Girls ganged up, calling her "fat" and "ugly." Boys tripped and pushed her. The California mother watched her typically bubbly second-grader retreat into her bedroom and spend afternoons curled up in bed.

For Valerie Aguirre's daughter in Hawaii, a spate of middle school "friend drama" escalated into violence and online bullying that left the 12-year-old feeling disconnected and lonely.

Both children received help through telehealth therapy, a service that schools around the country are offering in response to soaring mental health struggles among American youth.

Now at least 16 of the 20 largest U.S. public school districts are offering online therapy sessions to reach millions of students, according to an analysis by The Associated Press. In those districts alone, schools have signed provider contracts worth more than \$70 million.

The growth reflects a booming new business born



REBECCA BLACKWELL
Therapist Norma Kawatta, seen on screen, talks to Paris Carroll, VP of mental health clinical services for Hazel Health, as the pair demonstrate how the company's telehealth therapy service works for Miami-Dade County public school students, on World Mental Health Day, Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2023, at Miami Arts Studio, a public 6th-12th grade magnet school, in Miami.

from America's youth mental health crisis, which has proven so lucrative that venture capitalists are funding a new crop of school teletherapy companies. Some experts raise concerns about the quality of care offered by fast-growing tech companies.

As schools cope with shortages of in-person practitioners, however, educators say teletherapy works for many kids, and it's meeting a massive need. For rural schools and

lower-income students in particular, it has made therapy easier to access. Schools let students connect with online counselors during the school day or after hours from home.

"This is how we can prevent people from falling through the cracks," said Ishoo, a mother of two in Lancaster, California.

Ishoo recalls standing at her second-grader's bedroom door last year and wishing she could get through to her.

"What's wrong?" the mother would ask. The response made her heart heavy: "It's NOTHING, Mom."

Last spring, her school district launched a teletherapy program and she signed up her daughter. During a month of weekly sessions, the girl logged in from her bedroom and opened up to a therapist who gave her coping tools and breathing techniques to reduce anxiety. The therapist told her daughter: You are in charge of your own emotions. Don't give anyone else that control.

"She learned that it's OK to ask for help, and sometimes everyone needs some extra help," Ishoo said.

The 13,000-student school system, like so many others, has counselors and psychologists on staff, but not enough to meet the need, said Trish Wilson, the Lancaster district's coordinator of counselors.

Therapists in the area have full caseloads, making it impossible to refer students for immediate care, she said. But students can schedule a virtual session within days.

"Our preference is to provide our students in-person therapy. Obviously, that's not

always possible," said Wilson, whose district has referred more than 325 students to over 800 sessions since launching the online therapy program.

Students and their parents said in interviews they turned to teletherapy after struggling with feelings of sadness, loneliness, academic stress and anxiety. For many, the transition back to in-person school after distance learning was traumatic. Friendships had fractured, social skills deteriorated and tempers flared more easily.

Schools are footing the bill, many of them using federal pandemic relief money as experts have warned of alarming rates of youth depression, anxiety and suicide. Many school districts are signing contracts with private companies. Others are working with local health care providers, nonprofits or state programs.

Mental health experts welcome the extra support but caution about potential pitfalls. For one, it's getting harder to hire school counselors and psychologists, and competition with telehealth providers isn't helping.

"We have 44 counselor vacancies, and telehealth definitely impacts our ability to fill them," said Doreen Hogans, supervisor of school counseling in Prince George's County, Maryland. Hogans estimates 20% of school counselors who left have taken teletherapy jobs, which offer more flexible hours.

The rapid growth of the companies raises questions about the qualifications of the therapists, their experience with children and privacy protocols, said Kevin Dahill-Fuchel, executive director of Counseling in Schools, a nonprofit that helps schools bolster traditional, in-person mental health services.

"As we give these young people access to telehealth, I want to hear how all these other bases are covered," he said.

One of the biggest providers, San Francisco-based Hazel Health, started with telemedicine health services in schools in 2016 and expanded to mental health in May 2021, CEO Josh Golomb said. It now employs more than 300 clinicians providing teletherapy in over 150 school districts in 15 states.

The rapid expansions mean millions of dollars in revenue for Hazel. This year, the company signed a \$24 million contract with Los Angeles County to offer teletherapy services to 1.3 million students for two years.

Other clients include Hawaii, which is paying Hazel nearly \$4 million over three years to work with its public schools, and Clark County

schools in the Las Vegas area, which have allocated \$3.25 million for Hazel-provided teletherapy. The districts of Miami-Dade, Prince George's and Houston schools also have partnered with Hazel.

Despite the giant contracts, Golomb said Hazel is focused on ensuring child welfare outweighs the bottom line.

"We have the ethos of a nonprofit company but we're using a private-sector mechanism to reach as many kids as we can," Golomb said. Hazel raised \$51.5 million in venture capital funding in 2022 that fueled its expansion. "Do we have any concerns about any compromise in quality? The resounding answer is no."

Other providers are getting into the space. In November, New York City launched a free telehealth therapy service for teens to help eliminate barriers to access, said Ashwin Vasan, the city's health commissioner. New York is paying the startup TalkSpace \$26 million over three years for a service allowing teens aged 13 to 17 to download an app and connect with licensed therapists by phone, video or text.

Unlike other cities, New York is offering the service to all teens, whether enrolled in private, public or home schools, or not in school at all.

"I truly hope this normalizes and democratizes access to mental health care for our young people," Vasan said.

Many of Hawaii's referrals come from schools in rural or remote areas. Student clients have increased sharply in Maui since the deadly August wildfires, said Fern Yoshida, who oversees teletherapy for the state education department. So far this fall, students have logged 2,047 teletherapy visits, a three-fold increase from the same period last year.

One of them was Valerie Aguirre's daughter, whose fallout with two friends turned physical last year in sixth grade, when one of the girls slapped her daughter in the face. Aguirre suggested her daughter try teletherapy. After two months of online therapy, "she felt better," Aguirre said, with a realization that everyone makes mistakes and friendships can be mended.

In California, Ishoo says her daughter, now in third grade, is relaying wisdom to her sister, who started kindergarten this year.

"She walks her little sister to class and tells her everything will be OK. She's a different person. She's older and wiser. She reassures her sister," Ishoo said. "I heard her say, 'If kids are being mean to you, just ignore them.'"

GRAPHIC DESIGN SERVICES



GET THE DESIGNS YOU NEED

✓ Brochure Design

✓ Advertisement Design

✓ Banner Design

✓ Logo Design

✓ Designing Business Cards

✓ Poster Design

☎ (670) 235-2440

✉ sales@saipantribune.com

🌐 www.saipantribune.com

Hafa Adair
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

House Gaming Committee revises bill on e-gaming activities

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives Gaming Committee has revised a bill that originally will allow businesses on Saipan that cumulatively own more than 100 hotel rooms to engage in electronic gaming activities.

The original legislation, House Bill 23-85, proposed to amend the Commonwealth Code to add a new subsection to read that “any business that owns more than

one hotel and/or resort and cumulatively contains 100 or more rooms shall be allowed to engage in gaming activities,” provided however, that on Saipan “such activities must be conducted in western Garapan.”

The revised legislation, House Bill 23-85, House Substitute 1, proposes to amend the Commonwealth Code by adding a new subsection, which reads that “the hotel room is defined as a hotel, lodging house, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, rooming house, but not a private residence, bed and breakfast, condominium, or similar facility that is within an area or neighborhood that is primarily residential, that 1) serves or functions primarily as a room for transient accommodations by a paying guest and 2) has an area of not less than 135 square feet.”

Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-

Saipan), who is the author of the bill, told *Saipan Tribune* Monday that, with the revised legislation, they can now send it out for comments from stakeholders so that they are transparent about what they are doing.

» Revised bill proposes to allow ‘hotels’ with 30 or more rooms in Garapan to operate e-gaming

Yumul, who chairs the Gaming Committee, said the original bill was only signed for introductory purposes and they need to fix some provisions.

The substitute bill proposes that gaming activities within Saipan is allowed only in an enclosed area or resort premises that have 100 or more rooms, or 30 or more rooms if located on land within the following boundaries in Garapan: the area bordered by Orchid Street on the south, Beach Road on the east, Micro Beach on the north, and Coral Tree Avenue on the west.

Yumul stated in the bill that this legislation will allow for more flexibility for businesses that have the requisite number of hotel rooms, provided these rooms meet the requirements in terms of their primary purpose and design as well as minimum standards for room area.

Yumul said this exemption should also serve to create more jobs and provide more nighttime activities for tourists who are willing to utilize electronic gaming facilities.

The Tourism Entertainment and Destination Enhancement Act of 2013 (Pub-



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), who is the author of House Bill 23-85, explains that providing exemptions in the law would argument the electronic gaming industry's ability to grow while bolstering the CNMI's economy.

lic Law 18-30) authorized the operation electronic gaming activities to bolster the CNMI's economy, provided that such activities can only

be conducted in an enclosed area of a hotel or resort that has 100 or more rooms or with fewer than 100 rooms provided that they are at-

tached to a golf course.

Due to the CNMI's current economic state, such requirements have become problematic for electronic gaming ac-

tivities, Yumul said.

There are some businesses that own more than one resort and/or hotel in the CNMI. However, because of the room requirement stated in the Commonwealth Code, none of those individual resorts/hotels are eligible to operate an electronic gaming facility, Yumul said, since they do not contain more than 100 rooms nor are they attached to a golf course.

He underscored the need to amend the statute to allow for businesses operating under certain conditions to operate electronic gaming facilities.

He said such exemptions would argument the electronic gaming industry's ability to grow while bolstering the CNMI's economy.

Shoreline repairs to commence at Outer Cove Marina

This Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, work will begin to address the erosion of the shoreline revetment at the Outer Cove Marina. Construction will take place in phases and is expected to continue into 2025.

The National Park Service takes continued access to the marinas by the community very seriously and will work with the contractors and local

government to limit as much as possible any reductions in accessibility.

This initial phase will include the establishment of a site office across from the southern end of the Smiling Cove Marina parking lot. In addition, a small section of the southern area of the marina parking lot will be reserved for the project team.

At the Outer Cove Marina, the edge of Marina Lane where it is widest will be closed as a staging area for equipment. During construction, all roads will remain open with contractors providing traffic control. For everyone's safety, the community is asked to drive slowly throughout the marinas, to be aware of the project team working in the area, and

to follow their guidance in areas that are closed or restricted.

American Memorial Park will work to ensure that the public is kept apprised of changes in accessibility to the area and the progress of the project. Thank you for your understanding. Maps of the project and restricted areas may be found at the Visitor Center. (NPS)

Palacios withdraws nomination of Rabauliman to CEC board

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Due to time constraint, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has withdrawn the nomination of Trinidad L. Rabauliman to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Election Commission.

Palacios also re-nominated last week Gregorio Q. Castro to serve as member of the Board of Professional Licensing, representing Tinian and Aguiguan.

Palacios informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) last week that he is withdrawing Rabauliman's nomination at this time and will resubmit her nomination at a later date.

The governor appointed Rabauliman last Sept. 6 to serve as a member of the CEC board, representing Saipan and Northern Islands. The appointment requires the

Senate's consent. The Senate has yet to confirm Rabauliman's nomination.

If confirmed by the Senate, Rabauliman will serve a four-year term, which became vacant and will expire on July 21, 2025.

Rabauliman previously served as a member of the CEC board when then-governor Eloy S. Inos appointed her to the CEC board on Aug. 7, 2013. The Senate subsequently confirmed her nomination.

With respect to Castro's re-nomination, if confirmed by the Senate, he will serve a six-year term, which will commence on the date of his confirmation and oath of office.

Palacios said he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang are confident that Castro possesses the necessary qualifications and will continue to dedicate his time and efforts to this important board.



We Are

HIRING

Production Manager

We are pleased to announce an exceptional job opportunity. LSG Sky Chefs, a leading airline catering and food service provider, is seeking a Production Manager to join our team. Our company operates around the clock, providing services to our airline customers in Saipan. Our mission is to promote local growth by supporting the public school system as well as the local community. The ideal candidate for this position should have a wealth of experience and be able to assist us in expanding our horizons.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Manage food service activities, ensuring efficient and profitable food preparation and cooking.
- Oversee the training of chefs, cooks, and kitchen staff.
- Collaborate with subordinate supervisors to achieve departmental goals.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Associate's degree in Culinary Arts.
- Seven (7) years of professional culinary experience in a hotel/catering industry.
- Equivalent combinations of experience and training providing the necessary skills will be considered.

Interested candidates should submit their resume or inquiries to

rita.taitano@lsgskycheffs.com

DOT to offer \$1.5B in RAISE grants for rural, urban areas nationwide

By MELINA DRUGA
Transportation Today

The U.S. Department of Transportation will be awarding \$1.5 billion in the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, or RAISE, grants for 2024.

The RAISE program helps project sponsors com-

plete critical freight and passenger transportation infrastructure projects.

The agency will split funding between rural and urban areas.

At least \$15 million will be awarded to project located in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged

Communities. These projects will be eligible for up to 100 percent federal cost share.

"Across the country, I have seen firsthand how projects funded by our RAISE program are helping communities realize long-held dreams and well-planned visions for better infrastructure," U.S. Transportation

Secretary Pete Buttigieg said.

Applications are reviewed and evaluated on a variety of criteria including community connectivity, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, mobility, opportunity,

safety, and quality of life.

The agency encourages ap-

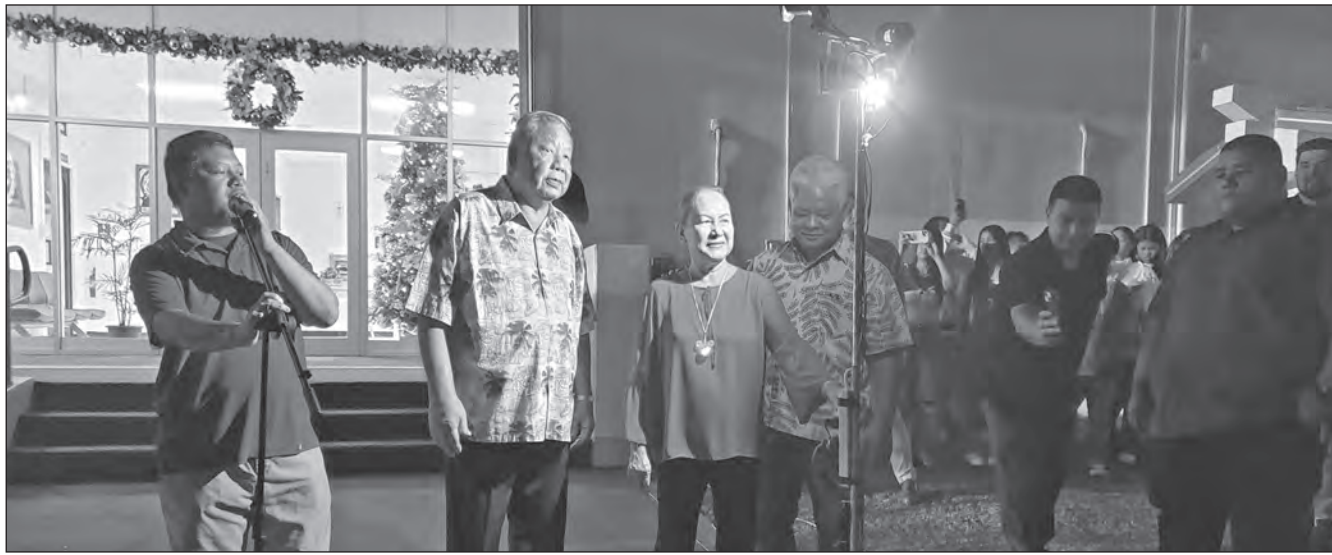
plicants to consider how projects can address climate change, ensure racial equity, or remove barriers to opportunity.

The application deadline is Feb. 28 with selections announced no later than June 27.

Last year, RAISE funding

supported 162 projects in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

The agency also intends to use the RAISE program to support job creation, wealth creation and lowering costs.



LIGHTING FESTIVITY

First Lady Wella Palacios presses the "on" switch during the Christmas in the Marianas Lighting Festivity in front of the Office of the Governor building on Capital Hill last night to usher in the holiday season in the CNMI. Also in the photo are Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, to Wella Palacios' left; Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, second from left; and special assistant to the Office of Youth Affairs Delbert Pua, extreme left. The lighting festivity is the project of the Lady Wella Foundation.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

KINGMAN

From page 1

that includes a previously dismissed contempt charge, Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro issued an order appointing Barcinas to serve as judge pro tem to handle the case, but Kingman is opposing the order on the grounds of efficient judicial administration.

"The Judiciary of Guam in general and Judge Barcinas in particular have demonstrated a commendable willingness to assist the Commonwealth with its needs for the administration of justice. This is neither the first nor last time such service will be called upon and appreciated. However, it has become apparent that the reliance on Judge Barcinas has created a workload that procedurally and substantive-

ly has diminished the effective administration of justice and the courts. Respectfully, the Commonwealth requests that a different judge be selected to serve pro tempore," he said.

In his 10-page opposition, Kingman argued that the pending 13-count charge against Torres is already assigned to Barcinas and progress on this case has allegedly slowed dramatically.

"The pending motions and hearings have been operating without scheduling orders necessary for the fair and efficient administration of justice. Subsequent cases—the nature of which the court and defendant are aware due to prior motions—will create the same spate of recusals by the members of the CNMI Judiciary. Once again, there will likely be a judge pro tempore facing the new alle-

gations," he said.

Kingman also argues that a substantive conflict exists if Barcinas handles this case.

"The present criminal case is the fourth case assigned to Judge Barcinas involving the investigation, and prosecution of [Torres'] alleged wrongdoing in office and legal obligations. Now, the defendant's case challenging the Commonwealth's contract with Kingman is also on Judge Barcinas's civil docket. These cases with overlapping issues of fact and law should not be decided with different standards or at different levels in different proceedings in front of the same decider," he said.

Last month, Kingman filed a new suit against Torres, charging him anew with contempt over his failure to comply with a legislative subpoena last December 2021.

Clerk of court Patrick Diaz issued a penal summons for Torres, stating he must appear before a judge on Dec. 18, 2023, at 9am. If he fails to appear, Torres faces possible arrest.

Aside from contempt, Kingman also charges Torres with misconduct in public office for failing to appear in compliance with the legislative subpoena.

This is not the first time the Office of the Attorney General filed a contempt suit against Torres, but that initial charge was dismissed in August 2022. Judge pro tem Alberto Tolentino's order granted, in part, and denied, in part, Torres' motion for the withdrawal or disqualification of the OAG as a prosecutor. It was in this order that the judge dismissed the contempt charge against Torres.

IPI

From page 1

to the notice.

The board determined that the reasonable deadline for IPI to pay the 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 casino license fees is 30 days from receipt of the notice.

The casino license fee for each year is \$15,502,570, for a total of \$62,010,280 for the four-year period.

At the board's regular monthly meeting last Oct. 26, the board determined that a "reasonable deadline" for IPI to pay the casino license fees is 30 calendar days from receipt of the notice.

Demapan stated in the notice issued on Thursday, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, that in determining the reasonable time, the commission considered the CNMI Supreme Court's ruling in CCC's lawsuit against IPI.

Demapan noted that the high court has ruled that the Casino License Agreement excuses any default in IPI's payment during a *force majeure* event, but not IPI's obligation to pay.

Force majeure refers to an unforeseeable circumstance that hinders a party from fulfilling its part in a contract. IPI claimed that the *force majeure* event in its case is

the COVID-19 pandemic that caused the company to close its casino.

During oral arguments at the CNMI Supreme Court in January 2023, IPI agreed that the COVID-19 *force majeure* event had ended.

Demapan said the high court determined that any lingering effects of COVID-19 on IPI's economic viability or ability to pay does not constitute a *force majeure* event and is not excused under the *force majeure* provision.

He said the Casino License Agreement references a "reasonable period of time" in the context of license suspension or revocation, stating that the Commonwealth may not re-

voke or suspend the CLA unless it provides "an adequate and reasonable period for [IPI] to cure the issue identified."

Demapan said many contracts provide a 30-day cure period for monetary default to provide sufficient time for the party to perform its obligation of making payment.

Demapan said 30 days is sufficient time for IPI to perform its obligation of making the required payment.

CCC's DeLeon Guerrero stated during Thursday's meeting that including the annual casino license fee and penalties for non-compliance with the CCC's mandates, IPI now owes CCC and the government over \$70 million in all.

MVA

From page 1

In an interview with MVA managing director Chris Concepcion, he said MVA is very excited to bring back the Christmas event, which has been a staple for MVA for nearly 20 years.

"This program is our campaign to liven up the tourist district, provide a space for residents and visitors to come and see and enjoy the Christmas spirit in the Commonwealth. This is a nearly 20-year-old event, so we're excited to keep it going, we're excited to have it here in T-Galleria," he said.

For the first time, MVA is collaborating with DFS T Galleria in hosting this event.

"Tonight, we had the launch in partnership with DFS T Galleria. Historically, we've always held this event at Paseo de Marianas and because the area is still under construction, we decided to

move it away from that area because of safety issues. DFS reached out, offering the possibility of using their property to host this event. We felt this environment is closer to the main tourist district, definitely closer to the hotels, shopping centers, restaurants, and gift shops. Tourists are staying just steps away from this area so we felt this was a better location. Also, the [Garapan] Fishing Base is used every weekend by our community for Sabalu Market and we don't want to disrupt that so we decided to move it over here," he said.

During last Saturday's lighting ceremony, MVA also launched the Garapan illumination project. These are the light sculptures on the palm trees along Beach Road in Garapan.

Concepcion said the Christmas trees and lights will be up until mid-January.

Competition winners, however, will be announced on the last Saturday of December.

TINIAN

From page 1

disconnected.

Saipan Tribune learned the last time a prepaid load was purchased for the *man'amko* center's utility meter was back in October. The center's power was shut off at 6am yesterday.

The center uses approximately \$1,500 worth of load a month. Once the prepaid load is used up, electric power is automatically cut off.

According to the CUC notice, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune*, the power to the *man'amko* center had been automatically cut off since the center's meter is prepaid and load had not been purchased to load the meter.

In an interview with Tinian *man'amko* center director Ana Marie San Nicolas, she said she had no choice but to close the center's doors yesterday morning due to these circumstances.

"I was at the center preparing the [elderly's] food at around 5am and, at around 6am, the power was shut off. I had to close the center because we don't have power and I honestly think we will remain closed for the rest of the week," she said.

San Nicolas explained that the Tinian *man'amko* center depends on its counterpart on

Saipan for its utilities as the Tinian center does not have a utilities budget of its own.

She said she learned that, as of yesterday, load had not been purchased for the center to keep their utilities running, despite efforts they have been making in the past months to bring their power consumption down.

"We love our *man'amko* here. We ask that the government help us here on Tinian, and even on Rota. We really need their help," she said.

The Tinian *man'amko* center currently has 75 congregates.

Of the 75, about 45 go to the center on a regular basis while the remaining 30 are homebound and center staff visit them regularly to provide them with food, San Nicolas said.

She said that Tinian's elderly who use the center were saddened by the news that the *man'amko* center was closed yesterday and will remain closed for now, as many of these individuals are home alone while their children and other family members are out at work or school.

"Most of our congregates wait here for their family. They pray here, they pass the time with bingo, they have lunch here, and then we either take them home or their children pick them up," she said.

HS students to compete in inaugural moot court competition

The NMI Supreme Court invites the public to attend the inaugural High School Moot Court Competition on Dec. 6 and 7, when 18 students from across the CNMI will present arguments on behalf of their client in a mock case before a court of appeals.

The champions, finalists,

and semifinalists will receive awards recognizing their achievement. The winning team will represent the Commonwealth at the National Association of Moot Court tournament at the University of California Santa Barbara in March 2024. Students with the best briefs and oral arguments will also be recognized.

The following students and

schools will be competing:

- Kaden Manglona & Genaro Mejia, Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Rota Jr. Sr. High School
- Yejin Son & Jenny Zhang, Marianas High School
- Princes Habal & Julia Taitano, Marianas High School
- Savannah Flores & Zhendrix Jandoc, Marianas High School
- Michael Zhou & Irene

Park, Saipan International School

- Libby Tom & Mimi Culp, Saipan International School
- Charlie Li & Jackie Zhen,

Saipan International School

- William Lee & Scarlett Kim, Saipan International School
- Hestina Park & Ian Song,

Saipan International School

The competition will take place at Guma' Hustisia and is open to the public, beginning at 10am. **(PR)**

SCC sets December general membership meeting

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will be holding its December general membership meeting today, Dec. 6, Wednesday, from 11:30am to 1pm at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

This meeting will feature updates from various Chamber committees and presentations by notable speakers. Former lawmaker Tina Sablan will share insights on "Our Clean Energy Future" and Chris Concepcion will present the Marianas Visitors Authority's tourism industry updates.

The registration fee is \$25

for Chamber members and \$35 for future-Chamber members. To confirm attendance, interested participants are encouraged to RSVP by visiting the following link: <https://business.saipanchamber.com/events/details/2023-december-general-membership-meeting-377?calendar-Month=2023-12-01>

In the spirit of the holiday season, the Chamber extends a heartfelt invitation to both members and future members to join in spreading joy and invites all attendees to make a positive impact by donating a

toy to the 2023 Toys for Tots campaign. Donating a toy will not only brighten the holiday season for those in need but also foster a sense of community and togetherness.

For more information about the meeting or to inquire about the 2023 Toys for Tots campaign, contact the Chamber office at (670) 234-7150 or email contactus@saipan-chamber.org.

Join us in making a difference and creating a festive atmosphere at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's December GMM! **(PR)**

Join the 124th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The CNMI public is being invited to join the annual Christmas Bird Count on Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023.

This event is free and open to the public. All skill levels and

ages are invited to participate.

You can add to a century of community science by joining a count. Started in 1900 by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count is

the world's longest-running citizen science project. The CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife has organized local counts for over 25 years, typically tallying thousands of birds and 50-plus species.

Volunteers for the Saipan Count will meet at 5:45am at American Memorial Park, and volunteers for the Rota Count will meet at 7am at West Harbor.

the Christmas Bird Count on Tinian will occur on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023, and volunteers will meet at the Tinian fiesta grounds at 5:45am.

Teams will spread out to cover the island, finding and recording as many birds and bird species as possible. Bring binoculars if you have any.

For more information, contact Amanda Santos at (670)664-6016. **(PR)**



REVOKE LICENSE NOW!

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Rep. Vicente Castro Camacho (D-Saipan) gestures as he speaks during the public comments portion of the Commonwealth Casino Commission's monthly meeting last Thursday. Camacho says Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has held the CNMI hostage for a long time and that their casino license should be revoked at once.

Health outreach for veterans this December

The VA Pacific Islands Health Care System will be offering health screenings for veterans living on the islands of Rota, Tinian, and Saipan.

"We will offer blood pressure screenings, routine vaccinations, diabetic foot exams, and other health screenings. If you are on blood pressure medications, please take them before coming to the event. If you received vaccinations in the community, please bring your record(s) with you so we can update your VA medical records," states a notice from the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System.

This Community Call Event is on Dec. 8, 2023, for Rota; Dec. 11, 2023, for Tinian; and Dec. 12, 2023, for Saipan.

Call Ruth Coleman at 670-322-0035 for any questions.

Locations

■ ROTA: Department of Commerce Conference Room, Dec. 8, 2023, from 10am to 2pm.

■ TINIAN: Tinian Public Library, Dec. 11, 2023, from 9am to 2pm.

■ SAIPAN: Saipan VA Clinic, MH II Atrium, Dec. 12, 2023, from 8am to 2pm. Marina Heights Business Park-Garapan **(PR)**

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

UOG Board of Regents meeting on Dec. 6

The University of Guam Board of Regents meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023, 5:30pm, Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Library, Silent Room, UOG, Mangilao, Guam.

The meeting will be publicly accessible by registering for Zoom access at

<https://zoom.us/j/97235445005>

A broadcast of the meeting via video livestream will be available on the UOG YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/uogtritons. **(UOG)**

4.8-magnitude earthquake on Maug

At 8:23am on Dec. 4, 2023, a report of a 4.8-magnitude

earthquake occurred on Maug region, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. **(PR)**

5.1-magnitude earthquake on Maug

At 9:58pm on Dec. 2, 2023, a report of a 5.1-magnitude earthquake occurred on Muag, Northern Marianas Islands. Currently there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. **(PR)**

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID
ITB24-CHCC/WIC-006

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 9, 2024

TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"REPLACEMENT OF THE AIRCONDITIONING UNIT SYSTEM"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.HEALTH) ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR, CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 02-2024

Opening date: November 24, 2023

Closing date: December 22, 2023

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (1) Saipan Airport Manager
(1) Comptroller

SALARY

\$70,000 (UNGRADED)
\$80,000 (UNGRADED)

Location: ROTA

Position(s): (1) Rota Ports Manager

SALARY

\$55,000 (UNGRADED)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00P.M. on Friday, December 22, 2023.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin., Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION
PARAGON RESOURCES, LLC
P.O. BOX 504007, SAIPAN MP 96950

The limited liability company under the name of Paragon Resources, LLC is filing this Notice of Dissolution effective December 6, 2023.

The Paragon Resources, LLC has been in business and has been gratified to contribute to CNMI's development. We are extremely proud of our accomplishments from the past year. Unfortunately, due to the current financial difficulties, the running of Paragon Resources, LLC has been difficult, like the rest of the companies in the CNMI. Due to this situation, we regret to shut down our company.

On this date of December 6, 2023, the company is winding up the disclosure of the Paragon Resources, LLC.

/s/ Arlene Mateo
Member-Manager

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500 / 1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM • WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
"Car Rental Concession"
Request for Proposals
for: CPA-RFP-001-24
CPA Concession No. CRS-2023-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of two years with an option upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-Concession No. CRS-2023-01 is **December 6, 2023**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on January 9, 2024**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of \$100.00. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, or cashier's check payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

/s/
LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director



Except for contestant No. 2, nine of the 10 contestants stand awaiting the results with judges behind them at the Kid's Rising Star Singing Competition on Nov. 24, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Three girls named Kids Rising Star

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Three girls gave standout performances at the Music and Performing Arts Competition Corporation's singing contest at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe, earning them the honor of being named Kid's Rising Star winners.

Alyana Rotap's emotional rendition of Les Miserables' *On My Own* won her first place and \$500. Coming in at second place was Francine Pineda, for her charming cover of Disney's *How Far I'll Go*, with which she won \$300. Hilah Bacani's smooth delivery of Stacey Ryan's *Fall in*

Love Alone got her into third place and a \$250 prize.

There was a total of 10 contestants in all.

Rotap expressed gratitude shortly after her win. "Honestly I just feel very grateful for everyone who's been around to support me and everyone who showed up to be with me today," said the 14-year-old.

Besides Rotap, Bacani, and Pineda, the other contestants were Francis Peter, Juliana Kai Oritz, Jason Jr. Villagomez Arriola, Kayleen Taflinger, Roane Palma, and Arman (complete name was not indicated). Only one contestant whose name was not disclosed failed to make it for the show.



From left, second place winner Francine Pineda, third place winner Hilah Bacani, and first place winner Alyana Rotap were awarded their prizes at the Kid's Rising Star Singing Competition on Nov. 24, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

CNMI's firefighters' union was first approved in 2021

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A firefighters' union in the CNMI is actually not a new development and has, in fact, been approved way back in 2021.

It was learned that the Northern Marianas Professional Firefighters Union was officially approved by the International Association of Fire Fighters — Local 5335 some two years ago.

Despite only being brought to public attention this past September, it was learned that the NMPFU was petitioned and was approved to affiliate and charter with the IAFF in May 2021.

NMPFU was approved as a not-for-profit 501(c)(5) organization by the Internal Revenue Service in February 2021 and was approved as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization by the CNMI Department of Commerce in April 2021. This means the NMPFU has been functioning since January 2021.

Currently, NMPFU members consist of 78 Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services personnel, and 25 personnel from the Commonwealth Ports Authority's Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting division.

The NMPFU has no physical office, but communicates with members through social media, specifically WhatsApp, and has a designated mailing address.

The NMPFU is the CNMI's first firefighters' union and the first union ever established for the CNMI government as there has been no previous attempt to establish one.

The NMPFU's main goal is to provide better wages, benefits, and opportunities for career-ladder advancement and quality of life for all professional firefighters in the CNMI that is fair and equal within the workforce.

The NMPFU submitted last Sept. 27, 2023, a letter of intent to start negotiations with DFEMS' current leadership.

NMPFU also submitted on Nov. 21 a letter of intent to mutually start negotiations with CPA ARFF leadership.

March deadline to submit corporation report

The CNMI Department of Commerce's Office of the Registrar of Corporations is notifying the public that the Annual Corporation Report for 2023 is due on March 1, 2024.

The Registrar of Corporations would like to remind the public that there will be a penalty of \$150 for all 2023 Annual Corporation Reports received after March 1, 2024.

After March 2, 2024, a penalty fee of \$10 will be charged for each day not counting weekends, holidays, and government austerity Mondays that the

report is not submitted, in addition to the \$150 penalty for late filing.

Pursuant to Public Law 21-37, a new fee structure was implemented for the CNMI Department of Commerce's Registrar of Corporations to allow for upgrades to improve record keeping capabilities and offer more efficient and effective services to corporations in the CNMI.

The new fee structure, which took effect on May 1, 2021, is available at http://www.cnmilaw.org/pdf/cmc_section/T4/4205.pdf (PR)

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP24-CHCC/CGC-CORS 988 PROGRAM-004

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JAN. 5TH, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

OFFICE LEASE

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP24-CHCC/WIC-003

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JAN. 05TH, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - BANGLADESHI INTERPRETER

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

18TH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Monday, December 11, 2023, at 2:30 p.m.
Sinapalo Elementary School Library
Sinapalo Elementary School, Rota
Via Zoom (see link below)

AGENDA¹

I. Preliminary

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes²
 - a. May 18, 2023 Regular Board meeting
 - b. August 16-17, 2023 Regular Board meeting
 - c. August 25-26, 2023 Emergency Board meeting
 - d. September 26, 2023 Emergency Board meeting
 - e. October 13, 2023 Regular Board Meeting
 - f. October 23, 2023 Special Board Meeting, Executive Session
 - g. November 13, 2023 Special Board Meeting

II. Public Comments²

III. Reports

1. Chair's Report
2. Committee Reports
 - a. CIP
 - b. FPA
 - c. ISA
 - d. LIA
 - e. SICPP
 - f. Student Representative
 - g. SARC
 - h. Internal Auditor

3. Commissioner of Education

- a. Financial Status Reports
 - i. Federal
 - ii. Local
- b. Head Start Program
- c. Others

IV. Unfinished Business

V. New Business

1. American Rescue Plan Spending Plan
2. Final FY 2022 Audit Report
3. FY 2024 Revised Budget
4. Somnak, LLC: PSS Solar Energy Systems
5. Waiver Request for Typhoon Bolaven
6. Certification & Licensure Matters
 - a. CLO Report No. 2023-18-07
7. Commissioner of Education Employment Contract
8. Regular Meeting Schedule for 2024

VI. Executive Session³

1. Legal Counsel's Report
2. Personnel
3. Other matters

VII. Miscellaneous

VIII. Discussion of Agenda for next Board Meeting

IX. Adjournment

¹Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/96771422754?pwd=eGw2Qj82TDVWZkZkeEd3ZHM2EdkUT09>
Meeting ID: 967 7142 2754
Passcode: 730223

²Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.

³Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

GCC completes first cohort of CHamoru language educators



GCC

The first cohort of CHamoru language teachers in the *Kumisión's Nina'fitme i Fina'nā'guen Fino' CHamoru* (Strengthening the Teaching of the CHamoru Language) Certificate Program graduate from the program in a completion ceremony last Nov. 29.

Guam Community College Liberal Studies CHamoru Education and Culture track and the *Kumisión i Fino' CHamoru* proudly celebrated the completion of the first cohort of CHamoru language teachers in the *Kumisión's Nina'fitme i Fina'nā'guen Fino' CHamoru* (Strengthening the Teaching of the CHamoru Language) Certificate Program. The completion ceremony took place on Wednesday, Nov. 29.

In presenting certificates to Cohort 1 participants, Dr. Laura M. Torres Souder, the *Kumisión's* chairperson, emphasized the significance of this capacity building certificate as a milestone in CHamoru medium pedagogy.

The 12-credit certificate program is part of a collaborative effort between the *Kumisión* and GCC to enhance instructional practice using immersion techniques



GCC

Guam Community College Liberal Studies CHamoru Education and Culture track and the *Kumisión i Fino' CHamoru* hold a completion ceremony last Nov. 29.

for teaching CHamoru as a language art.

Participating CHamoru teachers take one three-credit

course per semester that can be applied to a degree program at GCC, University of Guam or used as part of their credentialing requirement to teach CHamoru in Guam's schools. There are four cohorts being funded through the *Kumisión's* *Nina'fitme* Administration for Native Americans grant. The remaining three cohorts are currently ongoing.

Eight teachers took four GCC classes giving them a different set of tools to take back to the classroom, specifically in the areas of immersion, literacy, and history. Classes included CHamoru Language Teaching, Best Practices for Literacy Instruction, CHamoru Composition Immersion Method, Teaching CHamoru History & Culture—to strengthen their professional development. They also received practical training, which culminated in a showcase on Nov. 9.



GCC

Guam Community College Liberal Studies CHamoru Education and Culture track and the *Kumisión i Fino' CHamoru* hold a completion ceremony last Nov. 29.

"Students in the program created activities and read books to the students from P.C. Lujan Elementary School who receive instruction only in CHamoru, Chief Hurao Academy students, and St. Francis Catholic School students. It was a celebration of the CHamoru language in

every sense," said Simone Bollinger, GCC assistant professor and English Department chairperson.

This first cohort has also practiced their CHamoru language skills at the college level, engaging in conversations about culture, traditional arts, and literature *gi fino' CHamoru*.

Congratulations to the eight teachers in this first cohort: Bernadette RP Aldan, Praysia Manuela Castro, Raymond G. Chaco, Ryan Manuel Leon Guerrero, Jolyn GinMarie L. Mendiola, AnnMarie M. Rosario, Charlene Santos-Arriola, and Janice Pangelinan Toves. **(PR)**



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Saipan Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho gives some remarks before lighting up the Christmas lights at the Sugar King Park in Garapan last Friday.

Saipan Mayor's Office lights up Sugar King Park

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Setting the Sugar King Park in Garapan aglow in the spirit of the season, the Office of the Mayor of Saipan lit up the park with Christmas lights and decorations last Friday night in an event attended by dozens of community members as well as dignitaries

and their families.

The event began shortly after sunset, with the gathered crowd later checking out the Christmas lights and having their pictures taken.

During his remarks, Saipan Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho thanked all those present and noted that the lighting symbolizes community togetherness and the spirit of the holidays.

"If we maintain this spirit of togetherness, it can make things different for us here in our community. These past years we faced challenges and obstacles and yet we are resilient....," he said.

The park will be open every day from 5:30pm to 8:30pm and will continue to be open throughout the holidays until Jan. 8, 2024.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 242

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Mark Rabago EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Corporate America needs to embrace a new office-worker model

More than three years out from the pandemic's onset, when America's office workers suddenly had to do their jobs from their homes, a substantial majority of those employees have no desire to turn the clock back to 2019.

It's clear in survey after survey. Bosses intent on herding their workforce back into the office have met consistently with resistance, both overt and covert. White-collar workers like the flexibility the work-from-home routine provides. They appreciate not sitting in traffic or on trains for substantial portions of their day. They're happy not having to hire dog walkers and being available for their kids if the need arises.

America's workers also are unhappy generally. Strikingly so.

A recent Wall Street Journal story highlighting the trend pointed to a survey of 2,000 workers by the Lincolnshire-based human resources firm Alight in which more than a third said they "dreaded" starting work each morning. That was 11 percentage points higher than last year. Friction with bosses over returning to the office wasn't the only reason for the discontent, but it was a key part.

It's one thing to be less than enthused about your job. It's quite another to dread doing it.

It seems abundantly clear that the heyday of "the office"—that totemic feature of American life, celebrated in TV shows of yore like the "Mary Tyler Moore Show" and later satirized in shows like, yes, "The Office"—is over. The question now is, what will replace it?

It's easy to say that the new business model is likely to be a "hybrid." The majority of office workers will spend a fair chunk of time working from home, but also will need to be "at work" for some portion of the week.

That's an overly simplistic way of looking at the issue, though. Within that broad category, managers have many choices to make. How many days per week will workers need to be in the office? Which days? Will they be able to choose which ones, or will bosses want all their workers together at the same time?

The issues aren't exclusively about what workers desire, of course. Companies hire people to do jobs. They pay them and provide critical benefits such as health care insurance. They have every right to set expectations and hold their staffs accountable for a full day's work.

So, how do managers do those things effectively in a remote working environment? To what degree should an employee working from home with flexible expectations be expected to be "on call" in return? When are after-hours requests acceptable? How much should bosses and colleagues communicate electronically, via Slack or similar systems, and when and how often is direct, verbal communication necessary? The situation is especially tricky when managing both hourly and exempt employees, job categories subject to very different regulations.

And there's the issue even the most ardent work-from-home advocates acknowledge is a problem: How do people

See **CORPORATE** on Page 9



Do 70,000 people really need to be at a climate confab?

How many people do you think it takes to hammer out a global climate agreement? 500? 5,000? 50,000?

Apparently, the correct answer is 70,000. That's about how many people are expected to turn up in Dubai over the next few weeks for COP28, the latest United Nations climate confab, which started on Thursday. This is up from 49,704 at COP27 last year in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, and 38,457 at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland. Attendance has more than tripled since 2019. In COP's early years, attendance averaged just 5,000.

Whether this explosion is a sign that the world is taking climate change more seriously or just the bloat that naturally accumulates around gatherings of humans who control large pools of political and financial capital remains to be seen. Is COP Man devolving into Davos Man? The answer depends partly—but not entirely—on how much real progress gets made over the next few weeks.

On that front, it's difficult to be optimistic. Many of those 70,000 people will spend days continuing a yearslong argument over whether the world should phase fossil fuels "out" or "down" or whether those fuels should instead be "abated" by (iffy so far) carbon-capture technology. Meanwhile, big oil producers are still moving full steam ahead on phasing those fuels up, rapidly shrinking the window of opportunity to limit global heating to just 1.5C above pre-industrial averages.

"If the 'success' of COP was directly proportional to the number of delegates in attendance, COP28 would be a surefire triumph," David Oxley, head of climate economics at Capital Economics, wrote in a note. "However, at best, we suspect that the law of diminishing marginal returns holds true."

If one wanted to be nitpicky about it, one could argue that 70,000 people riding airplanes to an oil country on the Arabian Peninsula to talk about climate change feels a bit like staging an AA meeting in a Fort Lauderdale nightclub during spring break. You risk losing sight of the purpose.

To be fair, if those 70,000 people all fly commercial, then their climate impact might not be too ludicrous. A first-class round trip from New York's JFK airport to Dubai produces roughly 3 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per passenger, according to a UN calculator. That's less than a quarter of the carbon pollution the average American produces in a year. Flying economy cuts that impact in half again.

By comparison, Taylor Swift's private jet flights produced nearly 8,300 tons of CO2 in 2022, by one estimate. Then again, 70,000 people producing 210,000 tons of CO2 for one Dubai

By **MARK GONGLOFF**
Bloomberg Opinion

Mark Gongloff is a Bloomberg Opinion editor and columnist covering climate change. He previously worked for Fortune.com, the Huffington Post and the Wall Street Journal.



shindig is the equivalent of more than 25 Taylor Swift years.

And untold scores of those COP attendees won't be flying commercial. They'll be taking private jets, which generate 100 times more carbon pollution per passenger than commercial ones. At least 100 private aircraft flew to Sharm el-Sheikh last year, and 118 flew to Glasgow in 2021. This year, King Charles III, Rishi Sunak and David Cameron will each take their own PJ from the UK to Dubai. Jetpooling is a thing, you guys. Just ask Taylor.

The standard defense to such excess is that, in order to get very important people to very important talks, you might have to accept a risk that less important people will suffer a bit more sea-level rise, drought or wildfire in the future. And as climate talks have become more complicated, they have naturally required more bodies to work on them.

This year's COP won't just be haggling over words like "down" and "out." It will also involve detailed negotiations over climate finance and a "stocktake" accounting of exactly how far the world has come in fighting climate change (spoiler alert: not very). It might also involve fossil-fuel companies pledging to end methane emissions by 2030, which would actually be a huge development.

Still, if these meetings are to be constructive in the future, then they'll need to consider bloat. In a 2021 study, the European Capacity Building Initiative, a group focused on making climate talks less terrible, suggested COPs of 20,000 attendees were already too distended. It argued for pruning COPs back to 5,000 people doing the boring technical work of putting treaties into action.

Other business could be spread across smaller confabs throughout the year, the ECBI suggested, including a "Global Climate Action Week" that would fulfill humanity's need for dog-and-pony shows attracting the world leaders, celebrities and grifters currently turning COP into Green Davos. That still sounds like a lot of flying, unfortunately. But maybe it would be more productive, too.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Trump's plan to subvert American democracy is on the record. Will Republican voters care?

I have to hand it to the inimitable Charles Pierce of *Esquire* magazine.

A few days after media critic Margaret Sullivan complained in the *Guardian* that journalists were not effectively conveying the dangers of a second Trump administration, the headline on his essay did not mince words: "Nazi-Curious Madman Currently Under Indictment For 91 Felonies Gives Speech."

This is not hyperbole.

As former President Donald Trump appears to be sailing toward the Republican presidential nomination, he is increasingly embracing autocratic language and ideas, using rhetoric familiar to anyone who has studied the speeches of dictators and strongmen through history.

"I am your justice. ... I am your retribution," he told a crowd at a conservative political conference in March.

Illegal immigration, he told a right-wing website in October, is "poisoning the blood of our country."

"We pledge to you that we will root out the communists, Marxists, fascists and the radical-left thugs that live like vermin within the confines of our country—that lie and steal and cheat on elections," he told supporters in New Hampshire earlier this month.

If you are not alarmed by his rhetoric, then you are either not paying attention or don't recognize the danger he poses to democracy. Or perhaps—and I recognize that this may well be the case for many of his most ardent supporters—you think a strongman with protectionist impulses, racist policies and contempt for the rule of law is just what America needs.

And what would become of the current world order in a second Trump administration?

Does anyone, for example, believe for a moment that Trump, who has bent the knee to Russian President Vladimir Putin, would support Ukraine in its battle against Putin's war of aggression? Do you think for a second that the Islamophobic

Trump would exert any sort of moderating influence on Israel as its extremist government seems ever more intent on punishing not just Hamas, but every single Palestinian in Gaza and the West Bank as Iran watches and waits?

During Trump's first campaign in 2016, his supporters liked to say that his over-the-top rhetoric was mostly for show. "Take him seriously, not literally," they said.

If you bought that line, you were foolish.

Trump, as the Atlantic's Peter Wehner noted, is an "institutional arsonist." Wehner is a former speech writer for three Republican presidents and a senior fellow at the Trinity Forum, a nonprofit Christian think tank. "It is a rather remarkable indictment of those who claim to be followers of Jesus that they would continue to show fealty to a man whose cruel ethic has always been antithetical to Jesus's and becomes more so every day," Wehner wrote last week.

Trump has vowed to dismantle the federal bureaucracy, which he and his crony Steve Bannon love to dismiss as "the deep state," and end civil service protections for tens of thousands of federal employees he perceives as insufficiently loyal. If elected, he will fire them and replace them with political appointees. This plan, laid out in an executive order called "Schedule F," was secretly developed during his first term. Trump staffers told the website *Government Executive* that they had identified 50,000 federal employees to fire, "although they hope to fire only a fraction of that total to create a 'chilling effect' to keep the rest of them in line," the website reported. President Joe Biden rescinded the order as soon as he took office.

Trump has promised to use the Justice Department to go after his political enemies, including, of course, the Biden family.

The Washington Post reported that Trump has told advisers and friends he also wants the Justice Department to investigate former allies-turned-critics, such as his former chief of staff, John F. Kelly,

By **ROBIN ABCARIAN**

Los Angeles Times



his former attorney general, William Barr, and former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Mark Milley, whom Trump has suggested deserves the death penalty for communicating with Milley's Chinese counterparts to allay Chinese fears about an imminent U.S. attack at the end of Trump's tenure.

Trump's Republican collaborators are deeply implicated in his antidemocratic plans.

One flank is dedicated to rewriting the history of Jan. 6, the day that violent insurrectionists failed to thwart the results of the 2020 presidential election. A second is devoted to maintaining the fiction that the election was stolen from Trump.

Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene insists in her new book, a commercial flop that critics say reads like a tryout for a Trump administration job (VP, perchance?) that the insurrectionists were not MAGA Republicans, but left-wing extremists and undercover federal agents.

Her colleague, Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, refused to answer George Stephanopoulos recently when the ABC News host asked, "Can you say unequivocally that the 2020 election was not stolen?" Stephanopoulos must have asked the question six different times, and all Scalise could muster was "There were a handful of states that didn't follow their election laws." Does it really need to be said that making it easier for citizens to cast votes by allowing mail-in ballots or ballot drop boxes during a pandemic does not rig an election?

I happen to think that journalists have done a magnificent job exploring the dangers of a second Trump administration.

The question is, are Republican voters rational? Do they care?

Warts and all, international law is still better than no law

By **TERESA GHILARDUCCI** and **CHRISTOPHER D. COOK**

PROGRESSIVE PERSPECTIVES

When it comes to seniors' economic security, America is in poor shape. This October, an annual assessment of pension systems worldwide gave the United States a barely passable C+, ranking the country's retirement security apparatus below Kazakhstan and just a slight notch above Colombia, two far poorer nations. How can this be?

Similar to previous years, the Mercer/CFA Institute Global Pension Index found the U.S. system is marred by low benefits, conflicts of interest and anemic financing. No wonder elder poverty in this country ranks the highest among the G-7 nations at a drearily elevated 23.1%, while other rich OECD nations have senior poverty rates under 10%.

And senior poverty in America is getting worse. Due to eroding Social Security, failing 401(k)s and soaring medical costs, the poverty rate for U.S. seniors aged 65 and over rose between 2020 and 2022.

Elders are not alone in their deprivation. Poverty among U.S. children is also shamefully high at 21.3%.

While elder poverty actually eclipses that of children, the "Greedy Geezer" myth—the false notion that seniors' needs are raiding the nation's piggy bank for kids—refuses to go away. But in fact, there is no empirical evidence that pension systems transfer funds from the young to the old. Taking a dollar from the old does not mean the nation will give it to kids. Politics doesn't work that way.

When nations support vulnerable populations, both elders and children do better. Economist Axel Boersch-Supan examined 16 countries and found that a nation's generosity toward the elderly does not reduce the share of total social expenditures for programs targeting youth. Similarly, a group of American economists found that young people have higher returns

on their taxes than older cohorts when comparing U.S. education spending to Social Security and Medicare.

Research by this article's lead author revealed that, across at least 63 countries, spending for the young and old coincided rather than contradicted. To put it in numbers, a 10% increase in spending on education is correlated with a 7.3% increase in spending on pensions.

There is no "economic war of the generations," as some claim. As both senior and child poverty stay stubbornly high in America, the solution is clear: When one group is politically attacked, coalitions must rise up to defend both generations and their common fate.

To tackle child poverty, a few policies will go a long way: The child tax credit, earned income tax credit and Social Security are critical to helping poor kids and families escape impoverishment.

For America's seniors, we must boost Social Security's revenues and raise the minimum benefit. All workers need and deserve retirement protections. America's do-it-yourself retirement system, dominated by voluntary pension plans and eroding Social Security, works best for those at the top, while leaving tens of millions of elders out in the cold.

Seventy-seven percent of the over \$279 billion in retirement tax breaks go to the wealthiest 20% of Americans, according to an Economic Innovation Group report. What's more, only the top 10% of Americans have enjoyed wealth increases over the last 40 years.

Cutting Social Security only deepens these economic chasms. Instead, with targeted tax increases on the wealthiest Americans, we can sustain and expand Social Security and Medicare, keeping the hounds of elder poverty at bay. Tax breaks for retirement accounts should go to ordinary workers, for example by passing the newly introduced, bipartisan Retirement Savings for Americans Act.

Teresa Ghilarducci is professor of economics at the New School for Social Research and director of the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis. Christopher D. Cook is Senior Writer for The New School.

CORPORATE

From page 8

just entering the workforce get the training and mentoring they need and—just as critically—understand the culture of their workplaces if there are little to no face-to-face dealings with their new colleagues?

The protestations of Elon Musk, Jamie Dimon and other staunch critics of WFH notwithstanding, five full days a week in the office is not the future of most American workplaces. But as we write three years after the greatest upheaval in American work life in generations, it's also unclear what the settled upon model of white-collar work will be.

The growing discontent of labor demonstrates that workers don't think their companies are acknowledging the reality of a permanent hybrid model or are trying hard enough to fashion a new routine that works for everyone.






Corporate bosses like to talk about how their employees are their companies' most valuable assets. They fret about morale. They survey their workers each year on their views of managers, benefits, pay—everything associated with their work lives.

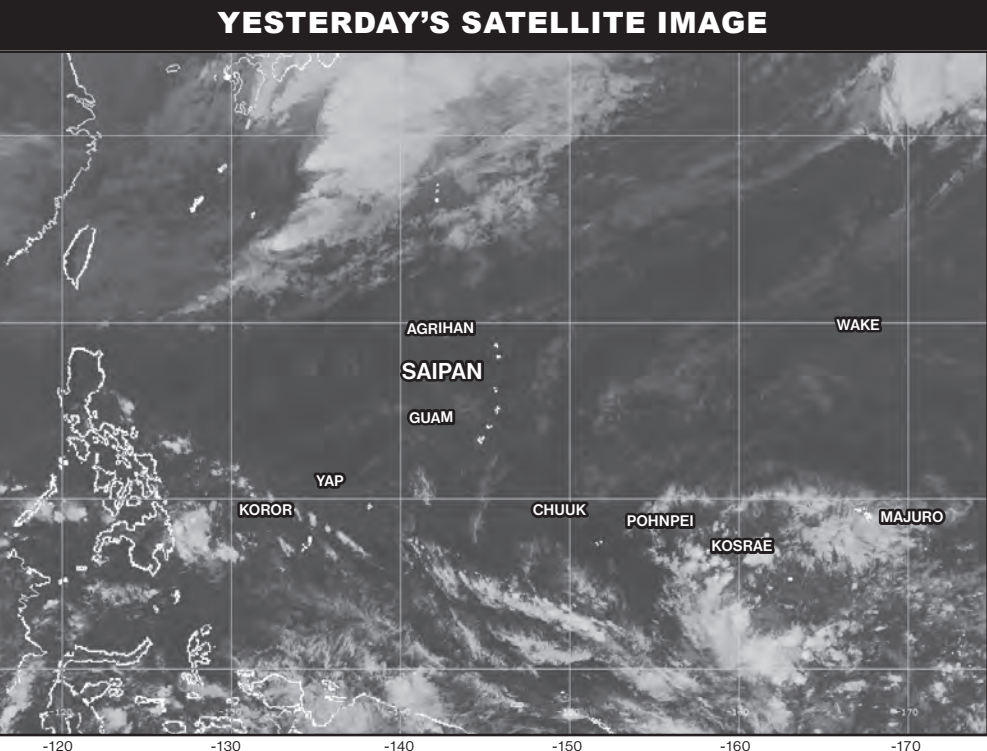
We don't doubt most of these managers truly worry and care about worker morale.

Happy, or at least contented, workers are a critical component of long-term business success. We think few bosses would disagree with that assertion. The corporate winners of the future will be those owned and/or run by forward-looking people who give thought and attention to all these questions, solicit input from their workers on their ideas, and then act transparently and with conviction on forging this new model in collaboration with their workers.

We don't pretend to know exactly what the new American office job will look like. We understand, too, that one size won't fit all. But we do exhort today's employers to get busier on the task of forging the new reality.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. east winds 10 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. east winds 10 to 20 mph.		Breezy at times. Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Breezy at times. Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Breezy at times. Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
87	77°	87	77°	87	77°	87	77°	87	77°



PICTURE TIME: 6:10 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite indicating mainly partly cloudy skies and isolated showers over the Marianas. Latest buoy and altimetry data are showing seas of 5 to 8 feet. Moderate to fresh trade winds continue.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 79°	
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 80°	
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 80°	
Chuuk	Cloudy	89° / 82°	
Pohnpei	Cloudy	88° / 81°	
Kosrae	Showers	86° / 80°	
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:29 AM	5:45 PM
Thursday	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Friday	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Saturday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Sunday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:29 AM	1:03 PM	-
Thursday	1:15 AM	1:35 PM	-
Friday	2:01 AM	2:09 PM	-
Saturday	2:49 AM	2:45 PM	-
Sunday	3:40 AM	3:24 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	67° / 62°	
Beijing	Fair	46° / 23°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	75° / 65°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	80° / 72°	
London	Rain	64° / 41°	
Los Angeles	Clear	77° / 51°	
Manila	Fair	94° / 79°	
Melbourne	Fair	91° / 60°	
Miami	Clear	84° / 73°	
New York	Showers	51° / 48°	
Osaka	Rain	56° / 44°	
Paris	Rain	50° / 38°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	58° / 39°	
Rome	Cloudy	54° / 38°	
Salem	Clear	65° / 46°	
San Francisco	Fair	63° / 52°	
Seoul	Sunny	49° / 34°	
Tokyo	Cloudy	57° / 42°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	55° / 43°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
12:58 AM	High Tide	1.09	
7:51 AM	Low Tide	0.29	
3:13 PM	High Tide	1.60	
9:57 PM	Low Tide	0.69	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

Business

Chamber, first lady's foundation unite for Toy for Tots drive-thru

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the First Lady Wella Foundation, proudly announces the launch of the Toys for Tots Campaign Toy Drive-Thru, a joint effort aimed at spreading joy and holiday cheer to families in need. The campaign team includes the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, the Associate Students of the Northern Marianas College, the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs, and the Women's Affairs Office.

Scheduled for Dec. 22, from 5pm to 8pm, or until supplies last, the toy drive-thru will take place at the American Memorial Park within the parking lot area. This event is open to the public, with a primary focus on reaching families facing financial hardships during the holiday season.

Kimberly Camacho, executive director of the Chamber, emphasized the campaign's commitment to the Toys for Tots foundation's mission: "collect new un-

wrapped toys and distribute those toys to less fortunate children at Christmas."

"We aim to serve families who may struggle to provide a gift for their children this Christmas," stated Camacho. "Our goal is to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those facing challenges during this festive season."

The event will strictly adhere to drive-thru protocols to ensure a safe and efficient process:

- Participants must be in a vehicle.

- No walk-ins will be allowed.

- Children must be present in the vehicle.

- The event is open for ages 0-17 only.

While identification of households won't be required, the organizers urge the community to uphold the spirit of honesty, aligning with the primary goal of serving all children in need.

Camacho highlighted, "The Toy Drive is on a first-come,

first-serve basis. We encourage the community to participate early, as the event is while supplies last. Volunteers will be stationed to collect information, including child gender and age, from each vehicle before reaching the distribution site, ensuring a seamless and organized process."

For further information, please contact the Saipan Chamber of Commerce at (670) 234-7150 or email contactus@saipanchamber.org.

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization whose mission is to empower our enterprises as a resource, advocate, and connector for Saipan's private sector. Its vision is to create an island where businesses, families, and communities succeed as one. For more information or to learn how to become a Chamber Member, visit online at www.saipanchamber.com, call 234-7150, or visit the 2nd Floor of the Marianas Business Plaza (Suite 201-A). (*Chamber*)

SC taking up case that could rule out tax on wealth favored by some Democrats

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Supreme Court is taking up a case Tuesday over a Washington couple's \$15,000 tax bill that is widely seen as a test of a never-enacted tax on wealth.

A decision in favor of Charles and Kathleen Moore of Redmond, Washington, could strike down a provision of the 2017 tax bill that is expected to bring in \$340 billion, threaten other provisions of the tax code and rule out a wealth tax that is favored by some Democrats who argue that the wealthiest Americans don't pay their fair share of taxes.

Paul Ryan, the Wisconsin Republican who was Speaker of the House when the tax bill was passed by a Republican Congress and signed into law by then-President Donald Trump, has called the challenge "misguided" and said

"a lot of the tax code would be unconstitutional if that thing prevailed."

The couple is backed by conservative political groups and business interests, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The law applies to companies that are owned by Americans, but do their business in foreign countries. It imposes a one-time tax on investors' shares of profits that have not been passed along to them, in order to offset other tax benefits.

The Moores paid \$15,000 in taxes based on Charles Moore's investment in an Indian company.

They argue that the tax violates the 16th Amendment, which allows the federal government to impose an income tax on Americans. Moore said in a sworn statement that he

never received any money from the company, KisanKraft Machine Tools Private Limited.

Some groups allied with the Moores argue that the challenged provision is similar to a wealth tax, which would apply not to the incomes of the very richest Americans, but their assets, like stock holdings, that now only get taxed when they are sold.

Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon said a court ruling for the Moores could stymie legislation like the Billionaires Income Tax he introduced last week. "The Moore case could make it impossible to close those loopholes," Wyden said.

The case also has kicked up ethical concerns and raised questions about the story the Moores' lawyers told in court filings. Public documents show that Charles Moore's involvement with the company, including serving as a director for five years, is far more extensive than court filings indicate.

Alaska Airlines buying Hawaiian Airlines

Another proposed airline buy-out is renewing debate over whether there has been too much consolidation in the industry—and whether consumers are paying the price.

The Biden administration has taken a tough stance against mergers, and it is certain to take a close look at Alaska Air Group's proposed acquisition of Hawaiian Air-

lines for \$1 billion in cash.

The deal is smaller than the mergers that reshaped the airline industry more than a decade ago. But the Justice Department is already fighting another smallish deal—JetBlue's proposal to buy Spirit Airlines.

Alaska Airlines parent Alaska Air Group announced Sunday that it will pay \$18 per share for Hawaiian—a

huge premium over Hawaiian's closing stock price on Friday. Hawaiian has struggled to recover from the pandemic and new competition from Southwest on intra-islands flights. It has lost \$159 million so far this year.

Alaska says Hawaiian will continue to operate as a stand-alone brand, an unusual step. (*AP*)

Nation

Zelenskyy to address US senators by video



AP

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy gestures as he talks during his interview with James Jordan, news director for Europe and Africa for The Associated Press in Kharkiv, Ukraine, Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023.

» As White House pushes Congress to support aid for Ukraine

WASHINGTON (AP)—Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will address U.S. senators by video Tuesday during a classified briefing as the Biden administration urges Congress to approve the White House's nearly \$106 billion request for funds for the wars in Ukraine, Israel and other security needs.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced Zelenskyy's appearance after the administration Monday sent an urgent warning about the need to approve the military and economic assistance to Ukraine, saying Kyiv's war effort to defend itself from Russia's invasion may grind to a halt without it.

Schumer said the administration had invited Zelenskyy to address the senators so they "could hear directly from him precisely what's at stake." They will also be hearing from the secretaries of Defense, State and other top

national security officials.

In a letter to House and Senate leaders and released publicly, Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young warned the U.S. will run out of funding to send weapons and assistance to Ukraine by the end of the year, saying that would "kneecap" Ukraine on the battlefield.

She added that the U.S. already has run out of money that it has used to prop up Ukraine's economy, and "if Ukraine's economy collapses, they will not be able to keep fighting, full stop."

"We are out of money—and nearly out of time," she wrote.

President Joe Biden has sought a nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other needs, but it has faced a difficult reception on Capitol Hill. There is growing GOP skepticism about the magnitude of assistance for Ukraine and even Republicans

supportive of the funding are insisting on U.S.-Mexico border policy changes to halt the flow of migrants as a condition for the assistance.

"Congress has to decide whether to continue to support the fight for freedom in Ukraine as part of the 50-nation coalition that President Biden has built, or whether Congress will ignore the lessons we've learned from history and let (Russian President Vladimir) Putin prevail," National security adviser Jake Sullivan said Monday. "It is that simple. It is that stark choice, and we hope that Congress on a bipartisan basis will make the right choice."

But negotiations over the border security package broke down over the weekend as Republicans insisted on provisions Democrats said are draconian, aides said. Talks are expected to resume this week, along with a test vote expected Wednesday.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said Monday that his party is "still at the table."

Owners of funeral home where 190 bodies were found to appear in court

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP)—The owners of a Colorado funeral home where 190 decomposing bodies were found are set to appear in court Tuesday, facing allegations that they abused corpses, stole, laundered money and forged documents.

Jon and Carie Hallford own Return to Nature Funeral Home, which has a facility in Penrose where investigators in early October discovered dozens of stacked bodies, some that had death dates as far back as 2019, according to a federal affidavit.

Family members had been falsely told their loved ones

were cremated and had received materials that were not their ashes, court records said.

Several families who hired Return to Nature to cremate their loved ones have told The Associated Press that the FBI confirmed to them privately that their loved ones were among the decaying bodies.

The Hallfords were arrested in Oklahoma last month, after allegedly fleeing Colorado to avoid prosecution. They have been jailed on a \$2 million bond. Both have been charged with approximately 190 counts of abuse of a corpse, five counts of theft, four counts of money

laundering and over 50 counts of forgery.

Court records say Jon Hallford is being represented by the public defender's office, which does not comment on cases to the media. Carie Hallford is being represented by attorney Michael Stuzynski, who declined to comment on the case.

After the bodies were removed from the facility in Penrose, about an hour south of Denver, authorities began working to identify the remains using fingerprints, dental records, medical hardware and DNA.

The Hallfords' funeral home business is based in Colorado Springs, just west of Penrose.

Asia

N. Korea accuses US of double standards



AP
In this photo provided by South Korea Defense Ministry, the third test flight of solid-fuel space rocket is launched from a barge in waters near Jeju Island, South Korea, Monday, Dec. 4, 2023.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea on Monday accused the United States of double standards, slamming it for letting rival South Korea launch a spy satellite from U.S. territory after condemning the North's earlier satellite launch.

Last Friday, South Korea launched its first domestically built spy satellite into space from California's Vandenberg Space Force Base. That came after North Korea put its own military spy satellite into orbit for the first time on Nov. 21.

Unlike the South Korean launch, North Korea's satellite liftoff drew immediate, strong rebukes from Washington, Seoul and their partners because it violated U.N. Security Council resolutions. The world body views any North Korean launch using ballistic technology as a cover for testing its missile technology. North Korea maintains it has the right to

launch satellites and test missiles in the face of what it calls U.S.-led military threats.

"It is a space-level tragedy-comedy that the U.S., going frantic with illegal denunciation and sanctions moves over the exercise of (North Korea's) sovereignty, has shown behavior based on double standards by launching a spy satellite of (South Korea) in a shameless manner," an unidentified spokesperson for the North's National Aerospace Technology Administration said in a statement.

The statement said if "the gangster-like logic of the U.S. ... is connived and tolerated, global peace and stability will be exposed to an irrevocable grave danger."

North Korea has said its spy satellite transmitted imagery with space views of key sites in the U.S. and South Korea, including the

White House and the Pentagon. But it hasn't yet released any of those satellite photos. Many outside experts question whether it can send militarily useful high-resolution imagery.

North Korea has said it'll launch additional spy satellites to better monitor its rivals' moves and enhance the precision-guided strike capability of its missiles.

South Korea also plans to launch four more spy satellites by 2025 under a contract with SpaceX. The establishment of its own space-based surveillance network would ease its dependence on U.S. spy satellites to monitor strategic facilities in North Korea. Experts say launching a satellite aboard a SpaceX rocket is more economical and that South Korea also needs more tests to ensure the reliability of a launch rocket.

At least 6 people dead due to heavy rains in India

NEW DELHI (AP)—Torrential rains and strong winds lashing India's southern and eastern coasts have killed at least six people, officials said, as states there braced for a powerful storm expected to make landfall later Tuesday.

The southern states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, as well as Odisha in the east, experienced heavy downpours Monday as authorities issued warnings for Tropical Cyclone Michaung, which is likely to hit the southern coast with maximum sustained winds of 90-100 kph (56-62 mph) and gusts up to 110 kph (68 mph), the Indian Meteorological Department said.

A deep depression over the Bay of Bengal intensified

into a tropical storm Monday as it inched towards Bapatla, a coastal district in Andhra Pradesh state.

On Monday night, authorities in Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, said six people in the city had died as the impending storm unleashed rains that caused trees to topple and walls to collapse, and submerged roads and cars in knee-deep waters.

Videos showed water streaming onto the city's airport tarmac, forcing authorities to shut it down and divert more than 30 flights while around 70 were canceled, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

Schools were shut in Andhra Pradesh, where the storm might make landfall, and officials

evacuated nearly 2,000 people from coastal and low-lying villages with instructions to move over 7,000 more to safer areas, local media reported.

Tamil Nadu authorities have set up nearly 5,000 relief camps in coastal areas. In Chennai, rescuers used boats to evacuate hundreds of people stranded on the roads and inside homes that had filled with floodwaters. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said the state was ready to face the storm with authorities deployed to vulnerable areas, and asked the public to stay indoors until it subsided.

India's weather department said parts of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh could see over 200 millimeters (8 inches) of rain as the storm approaches.

World

DRIVEN BY CHINA, INDIA, AVIATION

World carbon dioxide emissions rise again

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—The world this year pumped 1.1% more heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the air than last year because of increased pollution from China and India, a team of scientists reported.

The increase was reported early Tuesday at international climate talks, where global officials are trying to cut emissions by 43% by 2030. Instead, carbon pollution keeps rising, with 36.8 billion metric tons poured into the air in 2023, twice the annual amount of 40 years ago, according to Global Carbon Project, a group of international scientists who produce the gold standard of emissions counting.

"It now looks inevitable we will overshoot the 1.5 (degree Celsius, 2.7 degree Fahrenheit) target of the Paris Agreement, and leaders meeting at COP28 will have to agree rapid cuts in fossil fuel emissions even to keep the 2 (degree Celsius, 3.6 degree Fahrenheit) target alive," study lead author Pierre Friedlingstein of the University of Exeter said.

Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees is "just possible" but

only barely and with massive emission cuts, said Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Chairman Jim Skea.

"We are clearly not going in the right direction," Friedlingstein said.

This year, the burning of fossil fuel and manufacturing of cement have added the equivalent of putting 2.57 million pounds (1.17 million kilograms) of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every second.

If China and India were excluded from the count, world carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and cement manufacturing would have dropped, Friedlingstein said.

The world in 2023 increased its annual emissions by 398 million metric tons, but it was in three places: China, India and the skies. China's fossil fuel emissions went up 458 million metric tons from last year, India's went up 233 million metric tons and aviation emissions increased 145 million metric tons.

Outside of India and China, the rest of the world's fossil fuel emissions went down by 419 million metric tons, led

by Europe's 205 million metric ton drop and a decrease of 154 million metric tons in the United States.

Europe's 8% decrease was across the board with reduced emissions in coal, oil, gas and cement emissions, the report said. The U.S. decrease was almost entirely in coal, with slight increases in oil and gas emissions.

Last year the world's carbon emissions increased but dropped in China, which was still affected by a second wave of pandemic restrictions. This year, China's 4% jump in emissions is similar to the post-pandemic recovery other parts of the world had in 2022, Friedlingstein said.

The calculations are based on data from nations and companies for most of the year with the scientists projecting it through the end of this month.

United Nations Environment Programme Director Inger Andersen said the world needs to get to zero fossil fuel emissions "as fast as possible," with developed nations getting there by 2040 and developing nations by 2050 or at least 2060.

Israeli offensive shifts to crowded southern Gaza

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israel pounded targets in crowded southern Gaza on Saturday and ordered more neighborhoods designated for attack to evacuate, driving up the death toll as the United States and others urged it to do more to protect civilians a day after a truce collapsed.

The prospect of further cease-fires in Gaza appeared bleak, as Israel recalled its negotiators and Hamas' deputy leader said any further swap of Gaza-held hostages for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel would only happen as part of ending the war.

"We will continue the war until we achieve all its goals, and it's impossible to achieve those goals without the ground operation," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in an address Saturday night.

At least 200 Palestinians were killed after the fighting resumed Friday morning following the weeklong truce with the territory's ruling

militant group Hamas, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza. Several multi-story residential buildings were hit on Saturday, engulfing neighborhoods in huge clouds of smoke.

The military also dropped leaflets ordering the evacuation of areas that make up about one-quarter of the Gaza Strip, with hundreds of thousands of residents, U.N. monitors said. Ahead of a resumption of fighting, the United States had warned Israel to avoid significant new mass displacement.

Separately, the ministry said the overall death toll in Gaza since the Oct. 7 start of the war had surpassed 15,200, a sharp jump from the previous count of more than 13,300 on Nov. 20. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but it said 70% of the dead were women and children. It said more than 40,000 people had been wounded since the war began.

"Too many innocent Palestinians have been killed.

Frankly, the scale of civilian suffering and the images and videos coming from Gaza are devastating," U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris told reporters during the COP28 climate conference in Dubai.

Appeals from the U.S., Israel's closest ally, to protect civilians came after an offensive in the first weeks of the war devastated large areas of northern Gaza. Some 2 million Palestinians, almost Gaza's entire population, are now crammed into the territory's southern half.

Israel's military said it had hit more than 400 Hamas targets across Gaza over the past day, including more than 50 in Khan Younis city and surrounding areas in the south.

Bombardments on Saturday destroyed a block of about 50 residential buildings in the Shijaiyah neighborhood of Gaza City and a six-story building in the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya on the northern edge of the city, said the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Good Housekeeping

By **KAITLYN KEEGAN**
Hartford Courant

It's been quite a year for interior design. As houses are swept off the market in minutes after listing and new homeowners tackle what they want their home to be like, 2023 was marked with white, clean designs along with minimalism, shiplap and fast furniture.

The design world has shifted gears for 2024, ushering in

» It's all about the personality and character

an era of quartz, vintage furniture, wallpaper, cozy and divided interiors and bold colors and design. Sharon McCormick of Sharon McCormick Designs shared some tips on what's hot and what's not for the new year.

What's hot for 2024

In the kitchen, it's all about the quartz. Quartz and quartzite countertops have become all the rage versus granite, marble or laminate. Quartz has earned the top spot for its color selection, durability and scratch resistance.

As far as design in kitchens, wood grain kitchen cabinets, particularly white oak, or cabinets in vibrant colors are taking over from the white kitchens that were in the last few years. Statement hoods also make a big difference. Beverage stations for coffee, smoothies or a wine bar are also becoming popular if you have the space.

Another big change is the flip from open space layouts to more traditionally divided rooms. The allure of smaller, more intimate spaces began with the pandemic and the trend has only become more popular. Cozy, more nurturing spaces are taking over from



MARTINMARK/DREAMSTIME/TNS

Quartz has earned the top spot for its color selection, durability and scratch resistance.

What's hot and what's not in interior design for 2024

wide open layouts.

To furnish those rooms, think vintage. Upcycling and acquiring antiques has become very trendy. This keeps furniture out of landfills and also brings character to a home. For that vintage furniture, 2024 is bringing the curves. Curved designs in furniture and lighting are taking over this year. Consider wavy, wood furniture that adds a bit of pizzazz into a room.

When laying out your furniture in a room, maximalism without messiness is in. It plays into the want for cozy spaces. Accessorize as much as you want, but don't let things get too cluttered or overtaken especially in smaller rooms.

It's also time to play with colors, fabric and wallpaper. Bold patterns, especially striped and plaid fabrics, are very popular. This year, designers also like checkerboard patterns and tassels, fringe, braids and cords for window treatments and upholstery details.

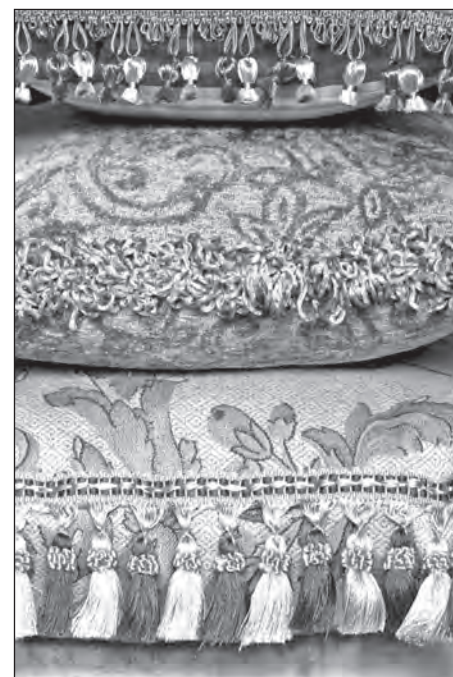
On the color wheel, neutrals have taken over from gray. Think warm tones like beige, tan, cream, brown, caramel, amber, honey and butter. Beside neutrals, blue

is the top color. Vibrant tones especially teal and aqua are hot along with purple, red and earthy greens.

As far as lighting spaces, layered lighting is popular. This can be done with bold, sculptural chandeliers, wall sconces, art lights, decorative ceiling lights and fixtures made of natural materials such as rattan, wicker and leather. If you have to do recessed lighting, canless LEDs are preferred.

Anything that adds character to a room is trending. This can be paneling or wall moldings, or customization and personalization. A big trend coming in for 2024 is decorated ceilings. You can achieve this look with paint, moldings, wallpaper or millwork. Wallpaper on the ceiling? It's in! Wallpaper can also be used to create murals to bring the outside in.

Did you go out and get a lot of mid-century modern furniture while it was trending the last year or two? While mid-century modern is falling out of style, you can mix in other styles with existing furniture to make a more eclectic look.



MARGIE HURWICH/DREAMSTIME/TNS

In the bedroom, layers are the key. Take multiple layers of bedding and use pillows, throws, upholstered furniture, wallpaper, art, lamps, moody colors and decorative lampshades.

In the bedroom, layers are the key. Take multiple layers of bedding and use pillows, throws, upholstered furniture, wallpaper, art, lamps, moody colors and decorative lampshades. Have fun with it. Off of the bedroom, dressing rooms are becoming more popular, if you have the space. Large walk in closets you can get changed in, dressing rooms are a way to declutter your bedroom and move those things to their own separate space.

What's on its way out from 2023

Some of the things falling out of favor have been slowly dropping in popularity over the last few years. For example, gray has been consistently dropping in the trends. Also dropping as all-white interiors and mid-century modern.

Other trends that are not so popular anymore include granite countertops, open floor plans and minimalism.

One of the biggest changes in trends is fast furniture or furniture that is cheaply made, easily broken, and short term.

These are the pieces most likely to end up in a landfill. The push to sustainability has driven this fast furniture industry out of favor.

Inside, there's a few design aspects you won't see as much of. These include boxy furniture, accent walls, matching furniture sets, can lighting and oversized bathtubs.

Also with the push to more individualism in design, sleek, generic, shiplap and impersonal hotel-style bedrooms have fallen from favor.

Overall, the trends are going toward having fun with your home design. Add more of your personality into your home. Don't be afraid of color or texture.

Keep your houseplants safe from cats

By **MELINDA MYERS**
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Growing houseplants when curious cats are in the house can be challenging. We want our cats to be safe and happy—all while keeping our houseplants intact.

You can accomplish both with a few simple strategies.

Create a list of all the plants you are growing. Include both common and botanical names for accurate identification. Do a bit of research on the care they need and their toxicity to your pets.

Consult with your veterinarian

and visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals website for a list of pet-safe and toxic plants. If you suspect your pet has ingested a toxic plant, you'll have the proper plant name when contacting your veterinarian.

Keep toxic plants out of the reach of curious cats. This can be challenging if your cat is skilled at jumping and climbing. There are so many beautiful houseplants out there that it may be safer to simply avoid those that are toxic.

Deter cats with the smell of citrus. Spray a mixture of

lemon, lime or orange juice diluted with some water on the leaves of your plant. Or purchase one of the commercial mixes. If you don't want to spray your plants, place citrus peels in the pot.

Coat the soil. Prevent potted plants from turning into litter boxes by covering the soil surface with coarse mulch, like cork or large nugget mulch. If this is not an option, spray the soil surface with the citrus and water mix to help discourage digging.

Give your cat a pot of grass. Most cat grass kits contain



DREAMSTIME/TNS

Consult with your veterinarian and visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals website for a list of pet-safe and toxic plants.

wheatgrass, oat grass, ryegrass or a mixture of these. A pot of cat grass can help entertain your cat, provide fiber and some micronutrients and aid in digestion. And, as important, give cats something else to nibble on instead of your houseplants.

Enlist the help of mounting putty. Prevent curious cats from knocking over any of your plant containers with the help of mounting putty. A couple of pieces of this hardware store staple on the bottom of a pot will help reduce the risk of toppling.

Implement these strategies, and your cats and plants are on their way to coexisting in your home.

Life & Style

Paul Giamatti may finally land his first best actor Oscar nomination

NEW YORK (AP)—When Paul Giamatti made “Sideways” with Alexander Payne, he stayed in a little house in the middle of a large vineyard. At the end of a day of shooting, he would drive home in darkness, with the California hills around him.

Giamatti was then a respected character actor, but this was one of his first times as the lead. And he couldn’t believe it.

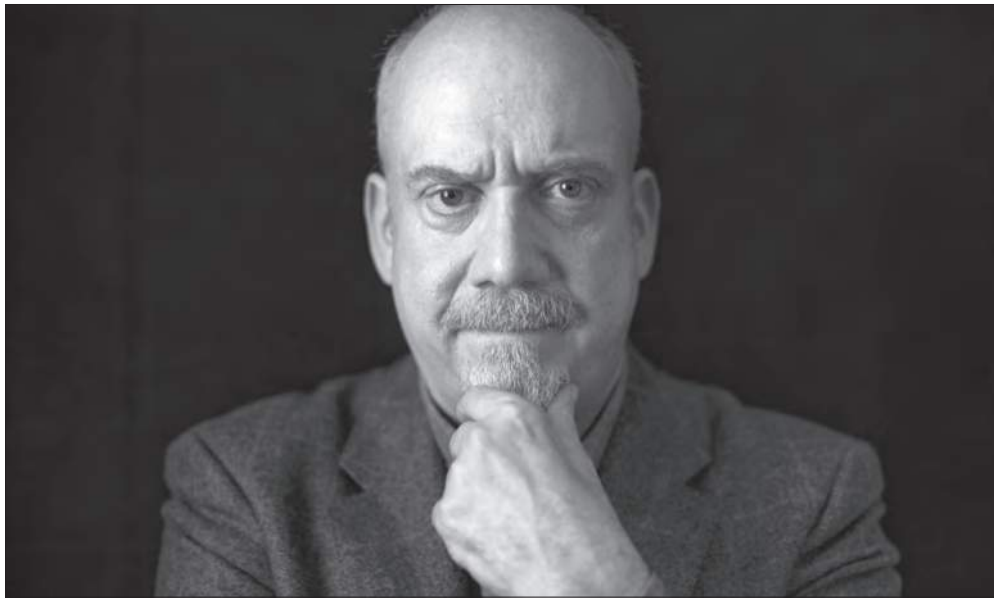
“I remember Alexander saying, ‘You two guys are going to do it,’” recalls Giamatti of himself and Thomas Hayden Church. “And we were like, ‘Seriously?’”

In the years since, Giamatti, 56, has remained a leading man, albeit an unlikely one. His ability to carry a movie is now, well, kind of obvious. That goes for indie gems like “Private Life” and “Win Win” or acclaimed series like “John Adams” and “Billions.”

But two decades later, “Sideways” remains lodged in Giamatti’s memory. “I remember every second of making it,” he said on a recent afternoon in Manhattan. Wide as his travels have been since — “Hamlet” at Yale, Jerry Heller in “Straight Outta Compton,” seven years on “Billions”—he’s not experienced anything quite like the natural, ensemble feel of “Sideways.” Until, that is, he reteamed with Payne for “The Holdovers.”

“I’ve never done anything like it again,” says Giamatti, “except this is the closest thing to it.”

“The Holdovers,” playing in theaters and available digitally, marks the long-incoming reunion of Giamatti and Payne.



Paul Giamatti poses for a portrait in New York on Monday, Nov. 27, 2023, to promote his film “The Holdovers.”

Just as in “Sideways,” their alchemy produces something wry and moving. The setting—a 1970s boarding school—has moved from California sunshine to snowy New England, and from pinot to whisky.

But a faint connection between the two movies is there. Giamatti plays Paul Hunham, an irascible classics professor, widely disliked by his students, who’s forced to spend Christmas break with a handful of students. The movie, a broad comedy at first, peels away a tender humanistic drama around the trio of Hunham, a bright, less well-off student (Dominic Sessa) and the school’s grieving head cook (Da’Vine Joy Randolph).

For Giamatti, the bookends of “Sideways” and “The Holdovers” inevitably prompt reflection on the distance he’s traveled in the intervening decades.

“All the stuff in between, I

mean the life changes, the professional stuff—it’s just insane. My whole life changed. I got divorced. Massive change,” Giamatti says. “I never talked to Alexander about this, but I thought there were similarities between the two characters. But it’s a guy 20 years on from the other guy. And probably there’s a lot of me 20 years on going into it.”

Hunham, like Giamatti’s struggling writer Miles Raymond of “Sideways,” is a prickly misanthrope stuck in a midlife stasis. In Giamatti’s hands, the dialogue of an erudite grouch sings. One example: “Christ on a crutch, what sort of fascist hash foundry are you running?”

“I kind of like this character better, for some reason,” Giamatti says. “He’s not as self-pitying. He’s got a little more zest. He, like, enjoys being the a-hole that he is.”

Payne and Giamatti have

talked for years about making another movie, including a private-eye film (“It’d be so great,” says Giamatti) and a Western (“I’m like, I would

do anything in a Western”). But it wasn’t until Payne got together with screenwriter David Hemingson with the idea of loosely adapting the 1935 French comedy “Merlusse” that they hit on the right project.

“I wanted to work with that guy again for 20 years,” says Payne. “I’ve been lucky to work with a lot of terrific actors, but we had a really terrific professional relationship making ‘Sideways.’ I was waiting for the right thing—and created it. I told David Hemingson: We’re writing for Paul Giamatti.”

“He’s just the best actor,” Payne adds. “He’s the finest actor. Not casting aspersions on others, I just think there’s nothing he cannot do.”

The part of Paul also had connections to Giamatti’s own upbringing. His father, A. Bartlett Giamatti, was an academic. Aside from being president of Yale and com-

missioner of Major League Baseball, he was a professor of English Renaissance literature. His mother, Toni, taught at the Hopkins School, the New Haven, Connecticut, prep school. The younger Giamatti, himself, attended the boarding school Choate as a day student.

“I think it’s why he was like, ‘You’ll get this character. This is sort of written for you.’ Because he knows I went to a school like that and I had a background like that,” says Giamatti. “He even knows I’m interested in Roman history. A lot it was kind of a big gift of like: You kind of know all of this.”

Asked for an example of how he and Payne work together, Giamatti describes a scene from “Sideways” when his character runs into his ex-wife and learns she’s newly married and pregnant. Miles, crushed, struggles to keep up a cheery facade.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Spotify axes 17% of workforce in third round of layoffs this year

LONDON (AP)—Spotify says it’s axing 17% of its global workforce, the music streaming service’s third round of layoffs this year as it moves to slash costs while focusing on becoming profitable. In a message to employees posted on the company’s blog Monday, CEO Daniel Ek said the jobs were being cut as part of a “strategic reorientation.” The post didn’t specify how many employees would lose their jobs, but a spokesperson confirmed that it amounts to about

1,500 people. Spotify had used cheap financing to expand the business and “invested significantly” in employees, content and marketing in 2020 and 2021, the blog post said.

YouTuber who staged California plane crash gets 6 months in prison for obstructing investigation

LOS ANGELES (AP)—An influencer who staged a California plane crash to make a YouTube video of himself parachuting to safety was sentenced Monday to six months in federal prison for obstructing the inves-

tigation by destroying the wreckage, the U.S. Justice Department. Trevor Daniel Jacob, 30, an experienced pilot and skydiver, pleaded guilty in June to one count of destruction and concealment with the intent to obstruct a federal investigation. The video titled “I Crashed My Airplane” appeared in December 2021 and purported to show Jacob’s small plane have engine failure over the mountainous Los Padres National Forest in Santa Barbara County. Already wearing a parachute, he jumped out with a selfie stick camera in hand.

Parents upset by daughter’s opaque and dodgy love life

DEAR ABBY: Three days before my daughter “Ginger’s” wedding, her fiancé called to announce that he could not marry her because she’s bisexual. It’s something he knew about for a year but waited until three days before the wedding to mention.

Needless to say, my husband and I were shocked, embarrassed and devastated. We had gone to a wedding with Ginger and her fiancé the Saturday before her wedding date, and they were excited about their own wedding, talking about the home they were building and about having a baby. By the following Wednesday, it was over! She has reimbursed us for half of our expenses for the wedding.

Ginger has since been involved mostly with women who have stolen from her, treated her badly and lied to her. We no longer trust our daughter because we thought she was happily engaged, but she lied when she told us how happy she was and how great she and her fiancé got along. We cannot accept the current situation, and our relationship with her is now very strained.

We told her to live her life but not to bring these women around. Since then, she has chosen to stay away. We miss our daughter but are not willing to accept this behavior. We don’t think Ginger is even trying to gain back our trust. Please give us your best advice.

LOST IN LOUISIANA

DEAR LOST: Has it occurred to you that your daughter may be a lesbian who tried to appease you and her father by claiming to be bisexual? It is a blessing to all concerned that the wedding was canceled.

If you’re a regular reader of my column, you surely must be aware that some women have dysfunctional “manpickers.” In your daughter’s case, she’s having the same problem choosing her female partners. Rejecting her because you don’t want “those women” around is not the solution to her problem. Instead, suggest she seek counseling at the nearest LGBTQ community center so she won’t continue seeking love in all the wrong places.

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend and I were excited to go on an \$11,000 Caribbean cruise. His 22-year-old son was not that enthusiastic. We invited him to join us for dinner, shows or to play games, but the majority of the time he refused. The only time he’d join us was for events that were paid for in advance.

He called his mom, grandmother and girlfriend every night, but not once did he call his father’s mother. To me, it seems like he’s not interested in his father, grandma or me. The moment we arrived home from vacation, he bolted out the door to meet his girlfriend and slept at his mom’s house. What can I do to bring this family together?

SOCIAL DISASTER

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



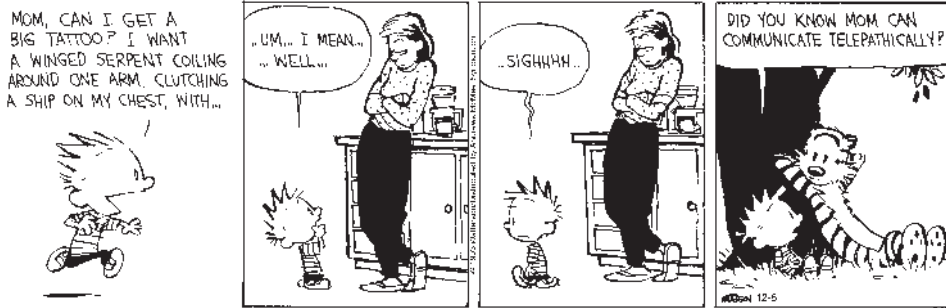
DEAR SOCIAL DISASTER: Although at 22 your boyfriend’s son is legally an adult, he didn’t act like one on that trip. In fact, he demonstrated that he was uninterested and didn’t want to interact with his father or with you. It is nice of you to want to bring him and his dad closer, but it’s time for you to step back and let them work it out. Nothing you can do will fix this.

To receive a collection of Abby’s most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



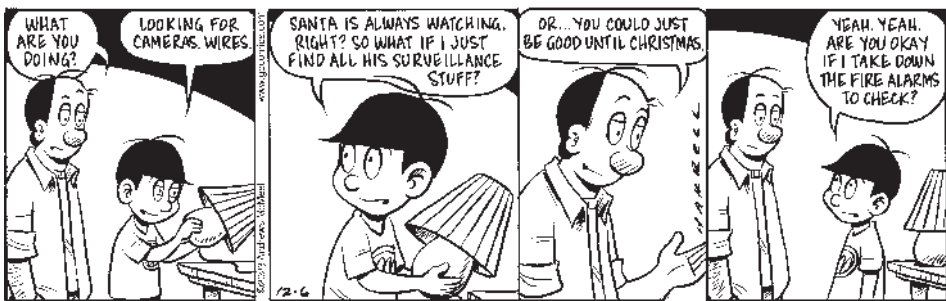
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



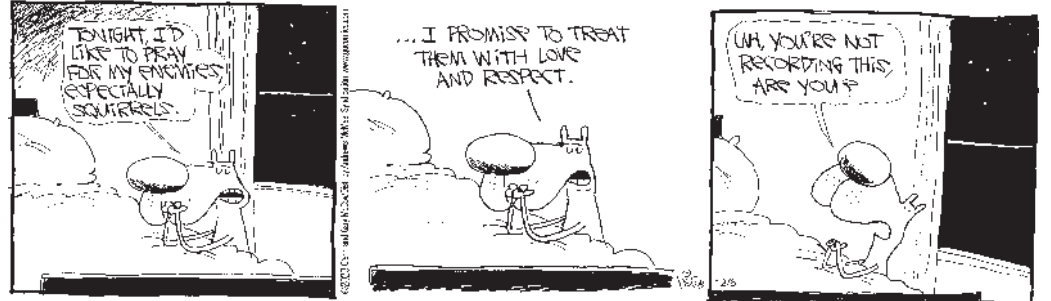
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Cyndi Lauper's "Bop"

4 Cambodia neighbor

8 Country singer Keith

12 Texter's guffaw

13 Staffer

14 Crunchy cookie

15 Parisian "yes"

16 Squad of superstars

18 Bakery product

20 "Norma"

21 Animation frames

24 Noisy kiss

28 Rover's reward

32 Toni Morrison novel

33 Fury

34 Pogo's place

36 Dapper fellow

DOWN

1 No neatrix

2 60 minutes

3 Writer Wiesel

4 Fire truck needs

5 Tire filler

6 Poem of praise

7 Char

8 Tribal emblems

9 Vein yield

10 Arthur of "Maude"

11 — Kippur

17 More (Sp.)

19 Performance

22 Pencil filler

23 Aegean Island

25 BMW rival

26 Untalkative one

27 Welles role

28 Platter

29 Like some vaccines

30 Actor Richard

31 AAA jobs

35 Pays to play

38 No more than

40 Airport screening org.

42 Have dinner

45 Really pesters

47 Editor's "keep it"

48 Always

49 Superior, for one

50 Wee dollop

51 Moody music

52 Chairman of China

53 Impose

54 Before

Solution time: 23 mins.

M	A	R	T	D	O	O	R	P	F	C
V	I	I	I	A	B	L	E	R	E	C
P	R	O	K	O	F	I	E	V	O	T
O	N	P	O	T	C	R	C	E		
P	O	R	K	T	T	P	E	S	E	T
F	N	O	R	R	E	A	D	I	F	
C	O	V	E	R	U	P	S		L	E
I	O	E	E		R	I	D	E	S	
W	I	D	O	W	L	E	I	S		
A	B	E		P	R	O	A	C	T	I
D	E	R		U	N	I	T		E	R
E	T	S		B	A	S		N	E	W

Yesterday's answer 12-6

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lindsay Price, 47; Judd Apatow, 56; Tom Hulse, 70; JoBeth Williams, 75.

Happy Birthday: Stick to the facts and be honest about how you feel and what you want to pursue this year. A direct approach to life, love and achieving happiness will give you the necessary advantage to turn your dreams into a reality. Opportunity is apparent, but intelligence, passion and hard work will be mandatory in getting what you want. Use your imagination and choose innovative ideas. Your numbers are 5, 17, 20, 27, 33, 38, 41.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Go over your investments, contracts, or health concerns and discuss any changes you want to make with someone you trust to give you sound advice. Don't let your emotions infiltrate into a professional situation. Maintaining a solid reputation is necessary to advance. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): An opportunity to learn will pay off and lead to something gratifying. Increasing your qualifications will get you a step closer to your objective. An open mind will help you see the possibilities and take advantage of an offer or deal you encounter. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Take the initiative to gather the facts, truth and alternatives available. Question anything that sounds misleading or unlikely. Rely on yourself before you trust someone else to do what's best for you. Keep your feelings to yourself to avoid someone interfering in your personal affairs. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Keep an open mind. If you let your emotions take over, you'll overreact or misread the situation. Concentrate on what you can achieve and

get along with those you need on your team to get things done on time. Self-improvement and romantic stability are favored. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Get the lowdown before moving. If you act on your emotions, regret will follow. Too much of anything will result in stress. Use intelligence to outmaneuver anyone trying to take over or lead you astray. A physical challenge will ease stress. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Invest in yourself, your home and your future. Make changes based on experience, knowledge and expert advice. Refrain from giving anyone control over your assets or how you delegate what gets done. Challenge yourself to do better, and adjust your lifestyle to ensure better health. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Act quickly; if you hesitate, you'll miss an opportunity to do something new and exciting. Take a step in a direction that offers stability and financial security. Talk to an expert who can point you in the right direction regarding investments and savings. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Call on reliable people and get things done without delay. Make alterations based on insight into the way others respond to you. Be secretive about your financial worth and long-term goals. Walk away from temptations. Don't wait to create opportunities. ★★★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Skip the drama and go directly to the source. Clearing up any issues between you and your expectations will put your mind at ease and show others your capabilities. Hard work and updating your qualifications will ensure success. ★★

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	4			7		6	2	5	
									4
			6	1			7	9	
		9		1	2			7	
				4	3	9		5	1
				6		9			
	8	7			1		3		
3	1		6	8	4		9		
6				5	7			8	

Difficulty: ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	2	3	6	5	1	7	9	8
8	6	7	2	9	4	3	5	1
9	1	5	8	3	7	2	6	4
2	9	4	5	1	3	6	8	7
6	5	1	7	8	2	4	3	9
3	7	8	4	6	9	5	1	2
5	4	6	1	7	8	9	2	3
1	3	2	9	4	6	8	7	5
7	8	9	3	2	5	1	4	6

Difficulty: ★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Check your bank balance before you spend. Live within your means instead of trying to impress someone with a lavish gift. Kindness and doing something to make someone's life easier will have a much more significant impact than spending frivolously. Romance is favored. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Keep your eye on what you want to achieve and your energy toward finishing what you start. Simplicity, moderation and self-control will lead to peace of mind. Pay attention to personal growth and physical improvements that honor proper nutrition, exercise and a healthy lifestyle. ★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Take the initiative to make things right. Educate yourself to help you figure out the best way to make your dreams come true. A lifestyle change or savings plan will ease stress and encourage you to take better care of yourself and your financial future. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You are persevering, enthusiastic and entertaining. You are empowering and gallant.

★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS

Solution: 8 letters

H	Y	W	O	R	K	E	R	D	Y	P	P	A	H	T
S	C	T	I	M	S	I	S	G	R	A	C	E	R	H
E	F	R	I	N	C	K	F	Y	R	E	L	E	C	I
O	M	O	U	R	T	E	C	A	O	P	A	A	B	S
H	A	A	O	H	A	E	V	O	I	T	E	M	I	T
S	S	S	G	D	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	O
T	S	S	N	I	O	C	C	U	E	H	G	H	R	
F	A	M	I	L	Y	Y	A	N	C	P	D	O	O	Y
I	H	Y	K	G	L	L	I	A	R	L	N	L	P	C
G	O	R	C	L	A	P	R	L	E	D	O	I	D	S
O	L	A	O	A	C	A	P	S	C	R	V	K	Y	A
O	I	J	T	H	E	E	Y	A	R	P	E	D	I	K
D	D	N	S	R	N	D	N	E	G	E	L	N	N	I
L	A	V	I	T	S	E	F	P	D	O	N	A	T	E
S	Y	F	S	E	N	E	R	D	L	I	H	C	S	S

©2023 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 12/6

Advent, Bishop, Candy, Charity, Children, Christmas, Church, Coins, Cookies, Cross, Donate, Dream, Faith, Family, Festival, Fireplace, Food, Gifts, Give, Gold, Good, Grace, Happy, Help, History, Holiday, Honor, Jolly, Kind, Legend, Mass, Myra, Peace, Pray, Presents, Saint, Santa Claus, Sharing, Shoes, Socks, Stocking, Teach, Toys, Treats, Winter, Worker

Yesterday's Answer: Horseshoe Found

Purchase the NEW Treasures 55 and 56 in time for the holidays at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

IN-SEASON TOURNAMENT

Ingram leads the Pelicans past Kings to advance to semis

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Brandon Ingram scored 30 points and the New Orleans Pelicans beat the Sacramento Kings 127-117 on Monday night in the quarterfinals of the NBA's In-Season Tournament.

Ingram helped New Orleans erase an early deficit and the Pelicans never trailed in the second half as they advanced to play the winner of Tuesday night's game between Phoenix and the Los Angeles Lakers in the semifinals Thursday in Las Vegas.

"It's a growth moment for us to have an opportunity to be one of the first," New Orleans coach Willie Green said. "This is the first time we've had the In-Season Tournament. You put a game in front of us that's meaningful, I don't care who it is, where it is, we want to win. That's the type of heart that we have in that locker room."

Herb Jones added 23 points and Jonas Valanciunas had 18 to give the Pelicans their third win over Sacramento in the past two weeks.

De'Aaron Fox scored 30 points and Domantas Sabonis added 26 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for the Kings.



New Orleans Pelicans forward Naji Marshall (8) walks off the floor after scoring during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings in Sacramento, Calif., Monday, Dec. 4, 2023.

Sacramento lost for the first time in the tournament after sweeping all four games in group play.

There was good energy from the sellout crowd, with many fans wearing blue T-shirts handed out to give the In-Season Tournament a playoff feel.

The intensity carried over to the court, with Sacramento's Trey Lyles getting into a dustup

with Valanciunas in the first half that earned him a technical foul.

"High-intensity game. Fun to be a part of," Green said. "I think the guys just relish these type of moments. It's experience for us, more than anything. We can lean on these experiences when we start to get down the stretch, when we face adversity, things like that. We love these moments."

The Kings made 12 of their first 14 shots to take a 32-17 lead before going cold during a 28-5 run spanning the first two quarters for the Pelicans. Sacramento missed 16 of 18 shots from the field during the spurt and had 10 turnovers in the first half.

"We have to be able to answer their run a lot better," Fox said. "When you turn the ball

over, just losing possessions, it starts to add up. Once they got the lead, we were never able to get it back."

New Orleans built its cushion to 15 in the third quarter behind big shots from Ingram before Sacramento started to chip away.

"(Ingram) was incredible," Green said. "He put us on his shoulders and he carried us. He had big shot after big shot. Whenever we needed a big bucket, we put it in his hands. He's a big-time player."

The Kings got within six midway through the fourth before the Pelicans scored nine straight points to put the game away.

Valanciunas made a hook shot and Trey Murphy hit a 3-pointer before Ingram and Jones each made a pair of free throws for New Orleans.

PACERS 122, CELTICS 112

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—All that Tyrese Haliburton wanted before the season was to get his first taste of playoff basketball.

Monday night's NBA In-Season Tournament quarterfinal seemed like the perfect dry run.

So the 23-year-old All-Star guard registered the first triple-double of his career, completed a tiebreaking four-point play with 1:33 left and heard the large, raucous crowd chanting "M-V-P! M-V-P!" near the end of Indiana's 122-112 victory, which ousted league-leading Boston from the tourney.

"It means the world to me to represent Indiana and this organization," Haliburton said after acknowledging he struggled to breathe during the first half. "I don't even know if it was as much about what was at stake, as what they did to us the last time. I think that (51-point loss) left a bad taste in our mouths."

This was one felt far sweeter even if he needed a halftime assist from an inhaler.

Haliburton scored 16 of his 26 points in the second half and finished with 13 assists and 10 rebounds. Myles Turner added 17 points and 10 rebounds, and seven Pacers reached double figures as Indiana remained unbeaten in the tourney. The Pacers were 4-0 in group play.

Indiana is the first team to reach the inaugural tourney's semifinal round Thursday in Las Vegas and will face the winner of Tuesday's game between New York and Milwaukee.

Boston, meanwhile, heads home despite getting another strong performance from its dynamic duo.

Jayson Tatum had 32 points and 12 rebounds, and Jaylen Brown finished with 30 points and nine rebounds for the Celtics. But it wasn't enough to extend a three-game winning streak, with All-Star Kristaps Porzingis missing his fourth straight game because of a strained left calf.

Still, the Celtics fought back from an 11-point third-quarter deficit and managed to force seven fourth-quarter ties—before Haliburton's 27-footer drew a foul on Brown and ignited Indiana's decisive 9-0 run.

"He played well. The whole team played well," Boston coach Joe Mazzulla said, referring to Haliburton and the Pacers. "(Brown) did the best he could (defensively)."

For the young Pacers, many of whom including Haliburton have never been to the playoffs, this was a different experience. From the towel-waving crowd's chants of "De-fense!" to the heavy media presence, single-elimination fate and festive atmosphere, this felt like a postseason game.

"I haven't heard it like this here in like three or four years, probably since (Victor) Oladipo was here," Turner said. "The energy was just incredible. I think this city really started rallying around this team."

There was a difference between the lines, too.

In this season's first matchup on Nov. 1, Boston blew out Indiana 155-104 — posting the second-highest points total in franchise history.

This time, Indiana turned the game in the third quarter, charging back from a 55-48 halftime deficit to tie the score at 71 before pulling out to an 85-74 lead.

Boston finally tied the score at 94 on Brown's 3-pointer with 6:07 left. But after the teams traded baskets for 4 1/2 minutes, Haliburton made the crowd roar again with his big basket.

There's a lot of money at stake in NBA In-Season Tournament

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

At stake over the next week in the NBA: a trip to Las Vegas for four teams, a chance to be the first team to hoist the league's newest trophy, medals for each of the players on the champion team, along with bragging rights for winning the inaugural in-season tournament.

And money. A lot of money. In a few cases, what some guys win on Saturday will be about half of what they'll make all season.

There are cash prizes for reaching the knockout round in the tournament, and the prizes will keep growing as a team advances. Each player gets \$500,000 for winning the title, \$200,000 for making the final, \$100,000 for reaching the semifinals and \$50,000 for making the quarterfinals. There is one caveat: two-way players on those rosters only get half as much as those on standard contracts.

Boston two-way player Neemias Queta doesn't mind. To him, whatever he gets will be appreciated.

"Obviously, it's some extra money, something to help your family, whatever it is," Queta said. "But at the end of the day, it's not the money that makes us want to get to the tourna-

ment. It's just the prestige of getting the first one."

For the highest-paid players left in this tournament—LeBron James and Anthony Davis of the Los Angeles Lakers; Phoenix teammates Bradley Beal, Kevin Durant and Devin Booker; Milwaukee teammates Damian Lillard and Giannis Antetokounmpo — winning \$500,000 would be like getting another game check.

But for players like Queta, one of 22 two-way players on the teams that made the knockout round, this tournament could bring a sizable bonus.

Two-way players make about \$559,000 this season. If they're on the title-winning team in Las Vegas, they'll get \$250,000 more. That'll be a 45% raise over what those guys expected to make this season. At minimum, just for being on a team that made the quarterfinals, the two-way players are already assured of \$25,000 each.

"It's another good reason to be motivated," Phoenix two-way player Saben Lee said. "But regardless, guys love to play basketball and compete at a high level."

There's a trophy for the winning team and medals for the winning players, along with an In-Season Tournament MVP

trophy and more trophies for those picked to the all-tournament team. The NBA will also distribute about \$18 million in bonus money based on results of the tournament, with just under half of that going to the winning team. James has the highest salary of the players still in the field at around \$47 million this season, so he basically makes about \$500,000 per game anyway.

That doesn't mean the cash hasn't piqued the interest of some of the league's top earners.

"I'm sure the richest guy in the world would be happy to get \$500,000," said Milwaukee's Khris Middleton, who's making just under \$29 million this season. "We're all excited about that opportunity to get some extra cash."

The quarterfinal matchups: It's Boston at Indiana and New Orleans at Sacramento on Monday, then New York at Milwaukee and Phoenix at the Lakers on Tuesday. Pelicans forward Zion Williamson said his team was pleased to be in the running for the title — and the running for that \$500,000-per-player prize.

"That's something that you can give to family members or whatever you plan on doing with it. I think that's good moti-

vation," Williamson said. "But also, for us, we haven't won nothing. So, I think that would be like a starter step for us, trying to go and win that."

The league's playoff pool has a similar setup—the deeper a team goes in the postseason, the more money it gets to share among players, coaches and staff. The 16 playoff teams split about \$27 million last season. It's up to each team on how to distribute its share.

But this tournament has a clearly defined bonus structure. And the drama could be high.

Imagine this: It's Saturday night in Las Vegas, the championship game is in the final seconds, a team has the ball down by one with a chance to win. A shot goes up as time is about to expire—and that shot might be worth about \$5 million to that player's team, based on the total difference between winning the tournament and finishing second.

"We talk about it all the time, the money that's on the line," Bucks forward Bobby Portis said. "It'll mean a lot. ... But the end award is what we're all shooting for, getting to the Finals, getting back there, drilling it and being the best we can be. This is nice but all our minds are focused on what can happen in June."

Browning steals spotlight as Bengals stun Jaguars in OT



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Jake Browning insists his first career start was

the real surprise. Everyone else would disagree.

Browning threw for 354 yards and a touchdown in his second start—much better than the four-sack, two-turnover performance a week earlier—and the Cincinnati Bengals stunned the Jacksonville Jaguars 34-31 in overtime Monday night.

“He just lit the world on fire,” coach Zac Taylor said.

Browning also ran for a score as the Bengals (6-6) won a road game on “Monday Night Football” for the first time since 1990. Evan McPherson’s 48-yard field goal in overtime was the difference and ended a three-game losing streak on the season and a nine-game road skid on MNF.

“After you put up 10 points in your first start, you’re excited to get another crack at it,” Browning said.

This one was shocking and potentially costly for the Jaguars (8-4), who lost quarterback Trevor Lawrence to a sprained right ankle late in the fourth quarter.

Left tackle Walker Little stepped on Lawrence’s ankle just before he was sacked. Lawrence tried to get up, but dropped to the ground, ripped off his helmet and threw it in disgust. He was helped off the field and into the tunnel for X-rays, which were negative.

Lawrence left the locker room in a walking boot and on



Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Jake Browning (6) gestures during the first half of an NFL football game against the Jacksonville Jaguars, Monday, Dec. 4, 2023, in Jacksonville, Fla. AP

crutches. He will have more tests Tuesday to determine the severity of the injury. It ended an otherwise stellar night for Lawrence, who completed 22 of 29 passes for 259 yards and two touchdowns. He also ran for a score.

Browning was equally stout in place of star Joe Burrow,

who watched and coached from the sideline while wearing a cast and a sling.

Browning completed 32 of 37 passes and directed the overtime drive that set up McPherson’s field goal. McPherson, who played collegiately at nearby Florida, banged a 57-yarder off the crossbar in the same di-

rection early in the game.

Jacksonville backup C.J. Beathard completed 9 of 10 passes for 63 yards in relief of Lawrence. Beathard put the Jaguars in position for Brandon McManus’ 40-yard field goal with 26 seconds remaining in regulation.

“It should have been a game-

winning field goal,” said Jaguars coach Doug Pederson, pointing to the 48-yarder McManus missed early in the fourth.

Ja’Marr Chase caught 11 passes for 149 yards and a touchdown, a 76-yarder in the third quarter that got the Bengals going.

“He’s so hard to bring down,”

Taylor said. “Anytime you get the ball in his hands, it’s stressful for the defense.”

Joe Mixon ran for 68 yards and two scores, and rookie Chase Brown added 61 yards on the ground for the league’s worst rushing attack. Mixon also had six receptions for 49 yards.

The Bengals made it harder that it should have been when Taylor called a trick play that turned into a debacle in third.

Browning lateraled to receiver Tyler Boyd, who inexplicably threw directly to pass rusher Josh Allen. Allen caught the ball for his second career interception. The Jaguars scored four plays later when Lawrence jumped and stretched the ball across the goal line.

“That could have broken our back there,” Taylor said. “But our team rallied around it.”

The Bengals did the same all week for Browning, whose first start ended in a 16-10 home loss to Pittsburgh.

“When he goes out there and leads the team like he did, it raises the entire confidence level of the team,” Taylor said.

The Bengals celebrated Mixon’s first TD run with a choreographed dance in the end zone. It all seemed to be going as planned until left tackle Orlando Brown leaned into a TV camera and yelled an expletive. That could earn Brown a fine from the league.

Bengals receiver Tee Higgins finished with three catches for 36 yards in his first game in a month. Higgins missed the last three games—all losses—with a hamstring injury. Higgins has 30 receptions for 364 yards and two touchdowns in a contract year. He called this injury his worst since his rookie season.

Zac Taylor pulled even with little brother Press in the “Taylor Bro Bowl” standings.

Their father, former Kansas State assistant coach Sherwood Taylor, keeps a trophy at their family home in Norman, Oklahoma, with the results of every head-to-head coaching matchup between his sons. Press, Jacksonville’s offensive coordinator, had won two of the last three meetings.

The all-time series is now 2-2-1.

Jacksonville lost receiver Christian Kirk (groin) on its first offensive play. He caught a 26-yard pass and stayed down for a few minutes before gingerly walking to the locker room. He did not return. Cornerback Tre Hurd (concussion) also was ruled out at halftime.

Defensive tackle Foley Fatukasi (ankle), safety Andre Cisco (shoulder) and left tackle Walker Little (hamstring) also missed time.

Flacco appeared to be least of Cleveland's problems in the Browns' loss to LA Rams

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Joe Flacco stepped behind center for his first NFL game since January and immediately led the Browns on a long scoring drive, capped by a 24-yard touchdown pass that set off a celebration on Cleveland’s sideline.

Sure, Cleveland’s 36-19 loss to the Los Angeles Rams on Sunday rarely went that smoothly again for the Browns (7-4).

Yet the 38-year-old Flacco seemed to leave the Browns confident that the quarterback position is no longer their biggest area of weakness while they attempt to rebound this week from their first losing streak of the season.

“I think Joe showed he can still play some football,” Cleveland left guard Joel Bitonio said. “I guess if you play 15 years, you don’t really get rattled.”

Flacco began his 16th season in the NFL on Sunday, and the former Super Bowl MVP performed remarkably well, considering he only joined Cleveland’s practice squad two

weeks ago and officially got this starting assignment Friday.

Flacco went 23 of 44 for 254 yards and two touchdowns, throwing his only interception midway through the fourth quarter while Cleveland attempted to rally from a one-point deficit.

After passing for over 42,000 yards in his career and leading several storied Baltimore Ravens teams, Flacco spent the past four seasons with decidedly less-talented clubs. The veteran was grateful for another chance to play meaningful games with gifted teammates.

“It’s one of the more talented teams I’ve been on in a while, and you can tell that right away,” Flacco said. “It’s not easy when you take these long road trips and come up empty-handed ... but hopefully when we get back in there during the week, we can go back out and have more good practices and eventually put this thing behind us.”

Beyond the mere numbers, Flacco made a series of tough throws throughout the day

against Los Angeles’ solid defense despite his unfamiliarity with the Browns’ offense or his receivers.

That supporting cast got even smaller when No. 1 receiver Amari Cooper was sidelined by a concussion in the second half, but Cleveland still mounted four drives longer than 50 yards, including three straight surrounding halftime.

“(Flacco) did some really good things today, put us in position,” Cleveland coach Kevin Stefanski said. “We’ve got to come away—we as the offense—with points in those situations.”

Flacco’s sole interception was his biggest regret, since it came with the Browns trailing 20-19 in the fourth quarter after they had driven for an apparent tying touchdown—only for Dustin Hopkins to miss the extra point.

Flacco got plenty of protection in the pocket on Cleveland’s first snap after its defense had forced a punt. But the Rams had his receivers covered down-

field, and he forced a throw that was poached by Los Angeles safety John Johnson.

“It ultimately was just a bad decision,” Flacco said. “I was late throwing that pass. Really wanted to get set, and they just matched everything up, and I had time in the pocket, but just lost track of the safety floating back there.”

Flacco got the start over inconsistent backup P.J. Walker because rookie Dorian Thompson-Robinson is out with a concussion, joining the high-priced Deshaun Watson on the shelf.

Cooper then joined Watson, Nick Chubb and Denzel Ward on the Browns’ long list of prominent injured players—but the Browns aren’t expecting sympathy.

“Of course it’s tough not having star players,” said Myles Garrett, who has gone back-to-back games without a sack for the first time since early last season. “No one asked for the situation that we’re in, but we’re in it. Can’t complain. Can’t moan about it. Just got to go out

there and put in the work, find a way to win.”

Stefanski installed a game plan to minimize the impact of Flacco’s unfamiliarity with the offense, and it resulted in 327 yards of offense.

“I thought they did a really good job,” Rams coach Sean McVay said. “We tried to be able to analyze some of the different things that Kevin and those guys have done. You knew that they were going to be committed to running the ball. They’ve mixed up personnel groupings as well.”

While Stefanski refused to say whether he thought Flacco would be his starter going forward, the veteran passer and his new teammates all seemed eager to have his experience behind center when the Browns host Jacksonville on Sunday to begin the five-game sprint to the postseason.

“Anytime you get a little taste of playing football, you want to keep that going for as long as possible,” Flacco said.

Maui tops YOSGC Championship



Wil "Paki" Maui won the annual Ye Olde Saipan Golfe Clubbe Championship last Saturday, Dec. 2, in sunny and windy conditions at the Coral Ocean Resort golf course.

The former bodybuilder, who also won in 2017, was in complete control of his powerful game, shooting a steady net 71 to pip runner-up Michael "26" Deary, who finished with a strong 73 despite coming to grief at hole 17, where valiantly he fought the back left greenside bunker, but the bunker won.

But there was no grief for Maui. The new champion golfer of the year triumphantly accepted the Ye Olde Saipan Golfe Clubbe's perpetual claret jug and champion's jacket from last year's champ Greg "Fossil" Koebel, and the prize money from club treasurer Richard "Caddy Dipper" Miller at the awards dinner held at



Wil "Paki" Maui happily receives the claret jug and cash prize.

Wild Bill's Bar and Grill.

Other participants in the championship were Timothy "Tex" Brasuell; "Double" Dan Harding; and Koebel, who finished in a three-way tie for third at 76; Curt "Kracker" Petersen; Caddy Dipper; and Bill "Supersandy" Rigen. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Runner-up Michael "26" Deary hits his approach on hole No. 14 at the Coral Ocean Resort golf course.



Wil "Paki" Maui drinks from the claret jug.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Last year's champion Greg "Fossil" Koebel slips the champions jacket onto 2023 Ye Olde Saipan Golfe Clubbe champion Wil "Paki" Maui during the awards ceremony at Wild Bill's last Dec. 2.

Prizes galore at Run Saipan Half Marathon, Atkins Kroll 5K



This Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023 is the annual Run Saipan Half Marathon and 5K Fun Run presented by Atkins Kroll. The race will start and finish at American Memorial Park across from the Hyatt. In addition to a finisher shirt and medal and a lunchtime awards banquet at Crowne Plaza, each runner will receive the chance to win numerous raffle prizes including special prizes from Atkins Kroll, membership at Gold's Gym, coupons from Tapped Out, Prizes from MarPac and a grand prize of \$500 cash.

For the under 18 runners, there are also some hydro flasks and insulated water bottles from the Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools. And the number keeps growing.

In addition to the personal prizes, Hong Ye Hardware will be offering a \$1,500 prize to the school that has the most participation.

The course for both the half marathon and the 5K is an out and back and there will be a

band playing at the finish line to help cheer the runners in. This promises to be a lot of fun for everyone. Don't miss out.

Please join us for this great event. It's not too late: <https://raceroster.com/events/2023/70413/2023-run-saipan-holiday-half-marathon-and-ak-5k-fun-run>.

Last year, high school students from Agape Christian School finished 1-2-3 in the inaugural Run Saipan Holiday Half Marathon 21K course that snaked from Sugar Dock in Chalan Kanoa and ended at Banzai Cliff in Marpi.

Racing past 68 other half marathon runners, Samuel Zhu, a 16-year-old sophomore; Stephen Chen, an 18-year-old junior; and Jireh Wang, a 16-year-old sophomore, were the Top 3 finishers after all three crossed the finish line under two hours.

Zhu won gold with his time of 1:51:07, followed by silver for Chen who clocked in at 1:51:46, and right at his heels a few seconds later, Wang came in for bronze with a time of 1:51:54.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Run Saipan member Aaron "The Door" Pamintuan models the Run Saipan Half Marathon shirt designed by Run Saipan secretary and treasurer Dr. Ron Snyder.

The women's overall winner was Savannah Grant who clocked in at 2:05:56, while silver went to Rosemarie Chisato at 2:10:32, and Emma Pang came in third with a time of 2:12:59.

Pony Tang and Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez—both high school student-athletes—dominated 290 other runners in the 5.5K Fun Run presented by Atkins

Kroll and Run Saipan in celebration of AK's 55 years of service also in Marpi.

Tang, a 16-year-old from Marianas High School and member of the MHS Run Club, raced through the finish line first overall with a time of 23:03, while Chavez from Saipan International School clocked in first in the women's division with a time of 25:09. (PR)

Montenegro vs. Trench Tech's Drey Aldan

■ Guam Muay Thai's Sam "The Tank" Emmanuel vs. Trench Tech's Stanley "The Raging Bull" Iakopo

■ Guam Muay Thai's Isaac Crisostomo vs. Trench Tech's "Prod" E.J. Nekaifes

"Ring of Fire" is sponsored by Miller Lite, Century Hotel, and Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car. Doors open at 5pm and the first match kicks off at 6pm. Tickets are on sale at Boarderline.

■ Guam Muay Thai's Jeremiah J-Comp Taitingfong vs. Latte Built Gym's Bonnie "The Hitman" Sagana

■ Mauler Boxing Academy's Prince "Poksu" Jackson vs. Team Latte Built's Josh "Lightning Strike" Socorro

■ Independent fighter Leo Tenorio vs. Trench Tech's Audiscott Iakopo

■ Mauler Boxing Academy's Glane "Saipan Mauler" Cepeda vs. Trench Tech's Mametto Iakopo

■ Independent fighter Javen

■ Guam Muay Thai's Jake Albert vs. Andres "Tanapag Beach Bad Boys" Camacho

■ Trench Tech's Phil "The Pain" Gregorio vs. independent fighter Angelo Pulido

■ Team MCAMMA/Primevil's Justin Palabay vs. Trench Tech's Mike Do

■ Trench Tech's Jimmy "Crazy Ray" Poll vs. Team MCAMMA/Primevil's Justin Agulto

■ Independent fighters Janel Enriquez vs. Antwon Indalecio

RING

From page 20

So, with all-out promotional fight events, we can help them accomplish their short- and long-term goals."

Alvarez said so far 13 of the 21 fight cards for the boxing and kickboxing event have been finalized and they are the following:

■ Mauler Boxing Academy's Edryan Bayot vs. Guam Muay Thai Boxing's Patterson Joseph

ALLIANA'S

From page 20

The win allowed Alliana's to catch Team Legends atop the league standings at 4-1, while the loss dropped Guardians to 3-1.

Speaking of Team Legends, the squad posted win No. 4 against a single loss after it triumphed against winless Johnny's Bar & Grill, 50-30, earlier in the evening in a painfully low-scoring contest.

Veteran Jun Tabora led Team Legends' rout of Johnny's Bar & Grill with 19 points, while Dick Tibayan added 16 points.

Albert Agustin and Paul Flores led Johnny's Bar & Grill's third loss in three games with 6 points apiece.

The Pacific Saipan Inc. Promo Invitational Basketball League is made up of eight teams with Maplas (2-1), Unity

Trade (1-2), Bourbon Bar & Café (1-2), and Eagles Team (0-3) also seeing action.

First Game

Team Legends 50 – Ju. Tabora 19, Tibayan 16, Ji. Tabora 11, Rosario 2, P. Tabora 2.

Johnny's Bar & Grill 30 – Agustin 6, Flores 6, Hernandez 4, Taraya 4, Brien 3, Saludez 3, Bongolan 2, Guiambao 2.

Scoring by quarters: 9-6, 22-12, 33-25, 50-30.

Second Game

Alliana's 74 – Mendoza 22, Meriales 20, Broncano 11, Tengco 11, Lightly 8, Kenichi 2.

Guardians 65 – Godoy 16, Dela Cruz 15, Diaz 11, Gonzales 7, Dericto 7, Gatbuntun 3, George 3, Didulo 2, Hermosa 1.

Scoring by quarters: 14-28, 38-37, 46-50, 74-65.

KOREANS

From page 20

nacias in 1:49:29 and 1:56:23, respectively. All of them hail from Saipan.

The MTB short course was a two-horse race between local riders Beth Kohnen (2:11:48) and Kris Romero (2:33:40).

The 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle was spon-

sored by Seman Law Offices LLC, Tan Holdings and Tan Siu Lin Foundation, IP&E, Turn-Key Solutions, Triple J Group of Companies, Pacific Trading Co., Hyatt Regency Saipan, The Bike Shop Saipan, Marpac Inc., and Herman's Modern Bakery. It was organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Cycling Federation with help from the Marianas Visitors Authority.

2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle



MAKOTO AYANO
Saitama Nasu SunBrave teammates including Ryohei Fujita, center, and Rinichiro Shigeta right, pose for a photo.



MAKOTO AYANO
Japan's Ryohei Fujita (2) and Rinichiro Shigeta (3) literally finished in a dead heat in the professional and expert division of the 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle last Saturday.



MAKOTO AYANO
Top 2 female cyclists Miso Kim and Jiseon Jang at the starting line.



MAKOTO AYANO
Guam's Ryan Matienzo, left, in action against a Saitama Nasu SunBrave cyclist.



MAKOTO AYANO
South Korea's Sean Ro leads a group of three cyclists.



MAKOTO AYANO
Volunteers hand water bottles along the route of the 100-kilometer of the 2023 Hell of the Marianas.



MAKOTO AYANO
Teenage phenom J.C. Ferrer of Saipan finished third in the women's non-pro long course.



MAKOTO AYANO
Former CNMI national triathlon team member Kathy Ruszala smiles as she crosses the finish line.



Ingram leads the Pelicans past Kings to advance to semis.

PAGE 16

Saipan Tribune Sports

Maui tops Ye Olde Saipanne Golfe Clubbe.

PAGE 18



20 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Koreans finish 1-2-3 in women's pro class

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Korean cyclists swept the podium in the women's pro/elite division of 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle last Saturday.

Miso Kim was the fleetest on two wheels in the 100-kilometer-long course that traversed the north, south, east, and west of Saipan—including 4,900 feet of ascents—with a time of 3:44:21.

Countrywomen Jiseon Jang and Jo Ara were a far second and third after crossing the finish line in 4:06:14 and 4:06:26, respectively.

Kim said through an interpreter that at the begging it was sunny and the weather was nice, but later there were a lot of rain and it became windy. That's when she ascertained why the event is called the Hell of the Marianas.

What made the 33-year-old amateur cyclist's feat more impressive was she finished first by more than 20 minutes despite a mishap.

Speaking through an interpreter again, Kim said she figured in an accident in the final leg of the course while cornering and the bad slip left her with scrapes on the forearms and legs.

The mishap aside, she said she thoroughly enjoyed her first Hell of the Marianas experience.

She describes herself as just someone who loves to ride a

bike and promised she will definitely come back next year to defend her title.

Saipan elite cyclists—Robyn Spaeth (4:25:51), Kimiko McKagan (4:45:20), and Kathy Ruzsala (5:24:24)—make up the rest of the participants in the women's pro/elite level.

In the non-pro women's division, cyclists from the former Hermit Kingdom dominated the Top 2 places with Eunji Bong and Charlotte Dixon submitting times of 4:16:57 and 5:09:38, respectively.

Saipan's teenage road bike and motorbike sensation, Jillian Christi "J.C." Ferrer, broke into the Top 3 after crossing the finish line in 5:19:06.

A total of seven female riders took on the challenge of the 100K course—Korea's Seonghee Park (5:20:34) and Jian Shin (5:36:38), Saipan's Kerri Bauer (5:43:58), and Korea's Song Ha (6:16:14).

Like the Top 10 men, the Top 7 women who conquered the 100K course pocketed between \$300 and \$25.

In the road bike 50K, Jay Anne Felipe ruled the roost in 1:46:18, followed by Shawna Brennfleck and Marjorie Ga-

See KOREANS on Page 18



South Korea's Miso Kim, center, duels Guam's Ryan Matienzo, right, and a Saitama Nasu SunBrave cyclist in last Saturday's 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle.



South Korea's Miso Kim, center, shares the podium with runner-up Jiseon Jang, left, and third place Jo Ara during the 2023 Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle awards banquet last Saturday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Alliana's deals Guardians its first loss

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR



There are no more undefeated teams in the Pacific Saipan Inc. Promo Invitational Basketball League after Alliana's drubbed erstwhile undefeated Guardians, 74-65, last Friday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

Alliana's started slow and found itself doubled up by Guardians, 28-14, as Jomari Dela Cruz fired two triples in the first quarter.

Jomar Tengco rallied his teammates in the second quarter and thanks to his 7 points Alliana's was able to turn the tables against Guardians and found itself nursing

a 38-37 lead at intermission.

The nip-and-tuck encounter continued in the second half with Guardians this time taking the initiative. Dela Cruz this time got some help from Darwin Gonzales and Rodmar Diaz as they entered the last 10 minutes of the contest ahead by 4 points, 50-46.

In the end, Alliana's outscored the suddenly defenseless Guardians, 28-15, in the fourth and final quarter to complete the 9-point win.

Richard Mendoza led all scorers with 22 points to lead Alliana's, while Jobert Meriales put up 20 markers in support. Jann Godoy led Guardians in the loss with 16 points with Dela Cruz chipping in 15 points of his own.

See ALLIANA'S on Page 18



Alliana's is atop the standings of the Pacific Saipan Inc. Promo Invitational Basketball League in a tie with Team Legends after exacting Guardian its first loss last Friday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

'Ring of Fire' on Dec. 16 marks return of local MMA

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR



Mixed martial arts fans won't have to wait much longer as Trench Warz Promotions will debut its "Ring of Fire" boxing and kickboxing events on Dec. 16 at the Garapan Central Park Round House.

Trench Warz president and MMA legend Justis "Cuki" Alvarez said after a long layoff he's finally happy to bring back combat sports to local fight fans.

"We are bringing back combat sports with the first ever 'Ring of Fire' boxing and kick-

boxing bouts. Matches will be held in a 14-foot x 14-foot square boxing ring. We have over 21 fights set in 10 different weight categories with kids as young as 14 all the way up to the oldest competitor who is 45 years old," he said.

There's been a drought of MMA action since Typhoon Yutu and COVID-19 stopped all manner of spectator combat sports on Saipan and Alvarez is more than happy to herald its return.

"I am introducing 'Ring of Fire' to our MMA line of promotional events such as Trench Warz, Rites of Passage, and The Art Of War Grappling tourna-



Mauler Boxing Academy fighters pose for a group photo. From left, Glaine Cepeda, Jamaal Mresbang, Albert Jackson, Gren Cepeda, and Edryan Bayot.

ments. We will be having the Ring of Fire' at least two times a year to groom up-and-coming

fighter who may want to take combat fighting as a career path.

See RING on Page 18